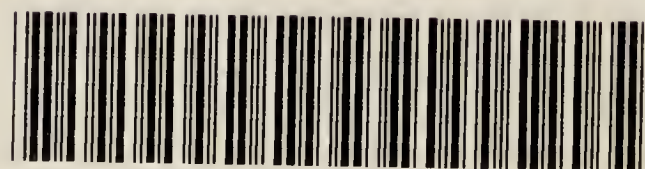


**The Philosophy of  
Nietzsche. An Exposition  
and an Appreciation. C.  
CHATTERTON - HILL**

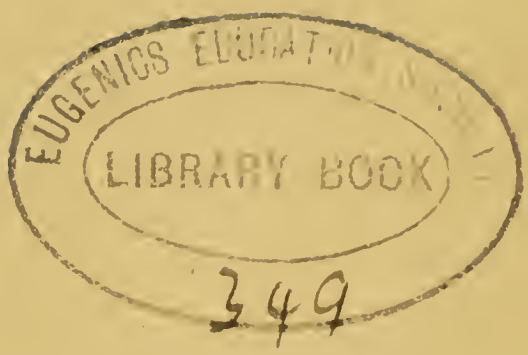




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THE PHILOSOPHY OF NIETZSCHE

Books by the same Author.

LA PHYSIOLOGIE MORALE.

Paris, 1904.

HEREDITY AND SELECTION  
IN SOCIOLOGY.

London, 1907.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL VALUE  
OF CHRISTIANITY.

London, 1912.



# The Philosophy of Nietzsche:

AN EXPOSITION AND AN  
❧ ❧ APPRECIATION ❧ ❧

BY

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## PREFACE

THE manuscript of this book was written as long ago as 1905. Seven years constitute a long period in the life of a young author. Since this manuscript was written, other work has been composed and has seen the light of day, amongst it being my books on "Heredity and Selection in Sociology," and "The Sociological Value of Christianity," and various essays. During seven years an author must inevitably go through various phases of mental evolution, he cannot fail to be influenced by the numerous books and persons with whom he comes in contact, and to have his horizon constantly enlarged thereby. I cannot say, therefore, that the point of view from which I judged things seven years ago is the same as that from which I judge them to-day.

For certain reasons the manuscript was not published at the time, and since then my attention has been taken up with other work. But now, following advice which has been tendered me, I have decided to publish it, without changing anything except a few unimportant details.

The book is as *objective* as possible—that is to say, I have endeavoured to place as clearly as I can the philosophy of Nietzsche before the reader, without putting forward my own opinions. It is Nietzsche's thought, *and Nietzsche's thought alone*, which is exposed here. It is impossible, however, when exposing the thought of another, to be oneself wholly and completely silent; my views may consequently

be found to have expressed themselves more than I should have wished, and more than it was my intention to have given expression to them. Should these views be found, by those who may have read other work of mine, not to be in harmony with the ideas developed in such other work, the explanation of this apparent anomaly is to be sought in the fact that the present book was written seven years ago, as mentioned above.

If this book can, in the slightest degree, help anyone, among the English-speaking public, to a stronger admiration for, and a better comprehension of, the most recent of the really great Masters of European thought ; if it should succeed in inciting anyone to study more deeply, and therefore to appreciate more fully, that magnificent German culture, illustrated by the names of so many immortal thinkers, poets and artists, to which modern civilisation owes so immense a debt ; the author may, perhaps, be pardoned for venturing to lay before the reader the present work.

My sincere gratitude is due to M. Henri Lichtenberger, Professor of German Literature at the University of Paris, and author of that admirable introduction to the study of Nietzsche's thought, *La Philosophie de Nietzsche*, which has had such great success in making Nietzsche known and appreciated in France. Professor Lichtenberger most kindly read my manuscript, besides rendering me other valuable assistance.

G. C.-H.

GENEVA, November 1912.



BOOK I  
CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Tag meines Lebens!  
Gen Abend geht's.  
Schon glüht Dein Auge  
halbgebrochen,  
Schon quillt Deines Thau's  
Thränengeträusel,  
Schon läuft still über weisse Meere  
Deiner Liebe Purpur,  
Deine letzte zögernde Seligkeit. . . .

Dies ist der Herbst : der—bricht Dir noch das Herz!  
Fliege fort ! fliege fort !

NIETZSCHE.

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF NIETZSCHE

## CHAPTER I

### THE LIFE OF NIETZSCHE

NIETZSCHE himself has said of Schopenhauer that he was the last German to enjoy an international reputation. The same remark may, however, more fitly be made of Friedrich Nietzsche himself. The powerful mind of Nietzsche has exercised an influence in Europe which it would be difficult to overestimate. During the last ten years the philosophy and letters of the Continent have been under the hypnotism of that gospel of life in all its plenitude and energy which, preached under the attractive form of aphorisms, vigorous and apodictical, has broken loose from the trammels of the dogmatic school which had dominated the world of Western thought since Immanuel Kant.

In Germany the philosophy of Nietzsche has given birth to a literature abundant in quantity and varying in quality. In France it has attracted the attention of all thinking circles and has become, as M. Ferdinand Brunetière remarks in the first volume of his "*Discours de Combat*," the "*philosophie à la mode*." M. Emile Faguet, M. Alfred Fouillée, M. Eugène de Roberty, M. Henri Lichtenberger, have contributed valuable works to the Nietzsche bibliography. In England something like a dozen



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books have been devoted to the life and teachings of the German philosopher, notably those of Mr T. Common, Mr A. M. Ludovici, Mr J. M. Kennedy, Dr Mügge, and Mr A. R. Orage ; while a translation of the whole of his works has been issued in eighteen substantial volumes under the editorship of Dr Oscar Levy. The first half of the official biography, written in German by Mrs Förster-Nietzsche, has recently been published in an English translation, and it is understood that the other part is to follow shortly. It is, however, regrettable that an even wider knowledge should not have been obtained of a doctrine which, whatever may be the views taken as to its fundamental principles, has exercised an invigorating and revivifying influence on the whole domain of philosophic thought ; and which, by calling in question the very basis of an almost universally accepted ethical creed—by calling in question the legitimacy of the moral law itself—has brought us face to face with those fundamental problems which every philosopher from Socrates onwards has sought to solve. Hitherto, with very few and almost unknown exceptions, every school of philosophy has been agreed on the fact that a universal moral law exists ; the differences of opinion arose as to the precise basis on which the categorical imperative could be grounded. Max Stirner was, we believe, the first to deny the existence of the categorical imperative altogether, and to preach the gospel of immoralism. But, even in spite of the persevering efforts of Mr Mackay, the name of Stirner remains unknown to the vast majority of men. It was the gospel preached with lyrical enthusiasm by Zarathustra - Nietzsche which first called general attention to the fact that serious reasons exist for

preferring the immoral to the moral, the untrue to the true.

It has often been objected with regard to Nietzsche that the numerous contradictions which are to be found scattered through his works themselves, preclude any attempt to systematise his philosophy. To this it may be replied that all, or almost all, these contradictions are capable of being resolved in the light of the master-thought which pervades all his writings ; and, indeed, that philosopher who is often held up as a model in respect of consistency, Kant himself, is by no means free from contradiction in the pages of the " Critique of Pure Reason " ; which fact does not prevent us from recognising Kant as the founder of a very fruitful and important system of philosophy. But with regard to Nietzsche, it may also be urged that he never intended his work to be regarded as a coherent and consistent " system." It does not appear that Nietzsche ever endeavoured to deduce any sociological conclusions from his philosophical premises. The philosophy of Nietzsche, in the eyes of its author, was the expression of a personality, of a character, of a temperament. We are therefore quite justified in endeavouring to systematise the writings and teachings of Nietzsche, in examining that teaching in the light of biological fact and sociological reality, in applying it to the solution of the fundamental problems of philosophy and of sociology ; but we should be committing a grave error if, in studying Nietzsche, we should make abstraction of the personality of the author. That personality reveals itself in every line, in every aphorism. If the work of Nietzsche is characterised by one fundamental doctrine: the belief in life in all its



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plenitude and power—which serves as a clue to the systematisation of his philosophy—it is also characterised by one fundamental feature: the sincerity and heroism of the writer's nature, which serves as a guide to the comprehension of his personality. And, as we have said, the personality of Nietzsche is intimately bound up with his philosophy.

Sincerity and heroism, we have said, are the two characteristics of Nietzsche's personality. To these qualities should be added a third—delicacy of sentiment and refinement of taste. These characteristics give us the clue to his rupture with Wagner, to the apparent brutality of his language, to his hatred of the democratic and plebeian movement, to his enthusiastic worship of art as the *raison-d'être* and object of life, to his detestation of the Christian religion. "All or nothing," was his motto, and he lived up to it. Gifted, as we have said, with an extraordinary refinement of sentiment and taste; having set himself as an ideal Life itself, and Life in beauty, in plenitude, in power, in exuberance of wealth; he was determined to be sincere with himself at all and every cost, to examine every ideal, however ancient, however sacred its traditions, however universal its acceptance; to examine it to the bottom, to reject it if necessary, at whatever cost of friendship or of suffering to himself; to affirm and reaffirm his ideal, that ideal which he held to be true; to affirm and reaffirm it in the face of the whole world if necessary, without compromise. To be able to do this—to be able to attack and reject all that which mankind has hitherto, by almost universal acceptance, held sacred; to be able to sacrifice all those ideas which tradition and education have rendered personally of value; to be able to sacrifice friends that one loves and venerates on the



altar of one's convictions—to do this requires courage above the ordinary: it requires heroism.

Refinement of taste is the third great characteristic of Nietzsche. The standard by which he judges of every ideal, whether in morality or in religion—which is morality in a higher potency—or in art, or in the intimacy of daily life, is its “*Vornehmheit*,” its elegance, its good taste, its æsthetic qualities. Nietzsche is essentially an artist. He is more an artist than a thinker; or rather his career as thinker is subordinated to his artistic propensities. And when we say of Nietzsche that he was an artist, we do not mean that he was a mere poet, or a mere musical composer—although he wrote some very delightful verses and was an excellent appreciator of music, if not a profound one—but we mean that his whole conception of life was an artistic conception; and even as he regarded the cosmological process in its entirety as an æsthetical manifestation of the universal Will of which life and the world and thought are composed, he also considered all the details of existence in their relation to his standard—a very high standard—of artistic value.

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in 1844, at Röcken, in Germany. Left fatherless at the age of five, he emigrated with his family in 1850 to Naumburg, where his first studies were undertaken. In 1858, at the age of fourteen, he entered the school at Schulpforta as a pupil, an institution which counted Klopstock, Fichte, Schlegel, von Ranke, among its former students. After leaving school he studied at Bonn (1864-1865) and at Leipzig (1865-1867). From an early age he had developed a liking and an aptitude for general culture, as opposed to that specialism which manifested itself

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already in the sixties and which tends to increase with every advance of modern civilisation. Confronted with the difficulty of choosing a career when entering the university, he selected philology as his speciality ; and in 1869, before even he had defended the thesis necessary to the obtaining of the degree of doctor at the University of Leipzig, we find him nominated to the post of Professor of Philology at the University of Bâle.

Nietzsche's career up till now had been uneventful. He and his sister, now Frau Förster-Nietzsche, were the only two children. The account which his sister gives of these early years shows Nietzsche to have been already in boyhood of a singularly thoughtful and serious disposition. His father was the Protestant pastor of Röcken, his native village, and Nietzsche was brought up in an atmosphere which, without being bigoted or austere, was deeply religious. This early education was destined to influence profoundly the whole life of the philosopher. However violently he may have later on broken loose from Christianity, however bitterly he may have criticised the faith of his forefathers, Nietzsche's remained always an essentially religious nature. The man who imagined himself to have effected the most complete separation with the past, who proclaimed at all times and in all places that " God is dead," that he was beyond and above all religion and all supernatural belief, that same man proved, by his worship of truth, by his fearless and intrepid sincerity, by his idealisation of life, that he was ever actuated by the most deeply religious principles. Certainly he was far above all churches and all religions ; but, if he emphatically repudiated belief in an anthropomorphic God, he believed in Life, in Life as a manifestation of Beauty ;



he believed in principles, and he lived up to his principles.

In 1869, therefore, we find Nietzsche occupying the chair of philology at Bâle. At Leipzig, as the pupil of Ritschl, he had devoted himself to the study of the Greek language and literature. From thence onwards he was a passionate lover of Greek life, of Greek art, of Greek philosophy. His study of that ancient and glorious civilisation revealed Nietzsche to himself. It brought to his knowledge a culture and an ideal which seemed to correspond most nearly to the ideal which he had already evoked of life. This search for himself, as we may call it, this endeavour to discover, in contact with the outer world, that ideal which was also his, or which was as near to his as possible, was destined to prove a painful, but very salutary, experience for Nietzsche.

From earliest boyhood upwards, we find Nietzsche's temperament deeply tinged with that aristocratism which is so characteristic a feature of his philosophy. He claimed always, whether rightly or not we know not, to be descended from the Polish race, from a family of Niëtzky, which is said to have sought shelter in Germany towards the beginning of the eighteenth century from the religious persecutions directed against Protestants in Poland. "A Count Niëtzky does not tell lies," Nietzsche used to say proudly to his sister when yet a boy; and this sentence gives us the clue to his aristocratic, extraordinarily refined and sensitive character. His breach with orthodoxy seems to have been effected gradually, without violent emotions. But that he was deeply conscious of the importance of the step which he took in abandoning Christianity is shown by several passages in his writings. The separation of Nietzsche from Chris-

## 16 THE PHILOSOPHY OF NIETZSCHE

tianity was in any case inevitable. His was too powerful a genius to be able to confine itself within the narrow domain of a dogmatic creed ; and the ideal of Christianity—of primitive Christianity—is the diametrical opposite of Nietzsche's ideal, which was also the ideal of the Greeks of the heroic age, and of the Romans before the disruption.

Nietzsche's search for himself, as we have called it, led him to explore vast fields of culture. His was ever a synthetical mind, to which the minute and detailed analysis of the scientist was repugnant. He had a natural aptitude for music and poetry, an aptitude which harmonised with the delicacy and refinement of his nature. He had an aptitude for literature, for philosophy ; he had the curiosity of new details, of adventurous research ; and above all he had an inborn love of life, of beauty, of strength ; and the life which is strong and beautiful, which manifests itself in all its integrity, which goes out conquering and to conquer, was the life which Nietzsche recognised as the ideal life.

As a consequence it ensued that all the manly virtues—courage, strength, purity, love of adventure, love of hardship and privation, even ferocity—were, in Nietzsche's eyes, above value. He had a natural repugnance for the Christian virtues of humility, gentleness, love, forgiveness—in a word, feminism. Beauty—Art—were the *raison-d'être* of life, its justification ; and beauty was synonymous with strength, with courage, with Power. The man who is strong and courageous and powerful is the justification of humanity. And such a man naturally detests those qualities which tend to minimise his strength and to undermine his power, such qualities, for instance, as humility and gentleness.



Life=Beauty  
Beauty=Power  
∴ Life=Power

Such was the syllogism which Nietzsche probably posed at a very early age. The question which now presented itself was: Such an ideal, has it ever existed, has it ever constituted the gospel, if not of humanity, at all events of a powerful and ruling race which dominates humanity?

His philological studies led Nietzsche to obtain a more profound knowledge of the ancient Hellenic world. And his study of Hellenic philosophy, of Hellenic art, of Hellenic poetry, and above all of the Hellenic drama, convinced him that the Hellenes of the pre-Socratic era had realised an ideal which corresponded to his own; that the ancient Hellenic culture was a culture in which life was regarded as synonymous with Beauty, and in which the vague mass of humanity was regarded as the basis for the establishment of a superior race, of a race which was the incarnation of the Will of Power, of a race whose object was to create beauty, and whose existence was the justification of the world.

Such was Nietzsche's conception of the Hellenic ideal, as revealed in Homer, in Æschylus, in Anaximander, in Pythagoras. It may have been right and it may have been wrong. But certain it is that this discovery, as Nietzsche considered it, of the secret of Greek civilisation, roused him to intense enthusiasm. Henceforth he was to judge of everything in the light of that ancient Greek ideal.

When Nietzsche came to Bâle, in 1869, Richard Wagner was living in his retreat at Tribschen. Nietzsche was soon on intimate terms with the creator of *Tristan*, and very frequently visited Wagner in his

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home on the Lake of Lucerne. This friendship between Nietzsche and Wagner was one of the most important, as it was also one of the most beautiful, events in the lives of both masters. One must go back to the friendship of Goethe and Schiller in order to find a parallel for the friendship of the musician and the philosopher. Nietzsche was roused to enthusiasm by Wagner's work. He saw in Wagner the reviver of Greek tragedy, the modern successor of Æschylus. A further meeting-ground in common was the philosophy of Schopenhauer. The great pessimist of Frankfurt had exercised a very great influence on Wagner, an influence which reveals itself especially in *Tristan and Isolde*. No less was the influence he exercised on Nietzsche. The latter first became acquainted with "The World as Will and Representation," in 1865, by an accident. From the first he was struck by the immense perspective opened out by this masterpiece, as well as by the remarkable personality of the author which shows itself in these pages. Nietzsche saw in Schopenhauer, and saw rightly, the destroyer of that happy and absurd optimism of which David Friedrich Strauss was the then representative, and which still reigns supreme to-day in certain circles, in which the qualities formerly attributed to an anthropomorphic deity have been transferred to the abstract entity called Reason.

From his study of Greek drama, Nietzsche had drawn the conclusion that two states of mind were ever present to the Greeks of the heroic era. The contemporaries of Æschylus were no mere optimists, believing in the ordered and harmonious governance of the universe. They were not afraid of the sight of all the pain and suffering that are the necessary accompaniments of the world-process. They were



strong enough, and brave enough, and powerful enough, and sufficiently sure of their power, to be able, not only to view the sight of the world's sufferings with complacency, but to *wish* for the spectacle, to enjoy the spectacle as an æsthetic vision, to enjoy it as a reminder of the reality of things, as an instrument for giving them conscience of their power, as an instrument for realising their power. Greek tragedy was the visible symbol of this feeling of invincible power in the face of suffering and pain ; it was in order to have the spectacle of the eternal struggle constantly evoked, constantly placed before them, that the Greeks had recourse to the tragedy. Only he who is strong enough to be able to surmount suffering, who is conscious of being superior to suffering, of being above it, can afford constantly to have evoked before his eyes scenes representing all that is most bitter, all that is most cruel, in the history of human nature and the world.

What was the secret of this power of the Greeks, which rendered them not merely indifferent to the sight of suffering, but which enabled them to regard suffering as an æsthetic manifestation of the universal Will-process which constitutes the world ? That secret Nietzsche saw in those two states of mind to which we have referred above. The Greeks, first of all, possessed the faculty of creating an ideal vision of the world as it should be, a vision which enabled them to escape from the tyranny of Being, which enabled them to regard suffering as the necessary means to the attainment of their ideal. The Olympian gods are the fruit of this ecstatic state of mind, the Apollinian, as Nietzsche termed it. The deities of Olympia were creations of beauty, whose existence inspired the Greeks with a consciousness of their own creative



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power, which opened out to them an endless perspective of the possibilities to be achieved by that creative power, which represented an ideal of supreme beauty and power and strength, whose beauty, power and strength alone sufficed to justify all the pain and all the tears and all the suffering necessary to create that radiant vision. In the Apollinian state of mind, when confronted by the beauty of that radiant vision which reflected his own strength and his own power, because his strength and his power had created it, man uplifted himself above the cares and worries of existence and exclaimed : “ Life, I love thee, I desire thee, for thou art beautiful and glorious, and thy beauty and thy glory do but represent the infinite possibilities of my strength and power.”

In the second place, the Greeks possessed the faculty of elevating themselves above the narrow limits in which individual life is confined, and of contemplating Life as a whole, in its eternity, above and beyond the fact of individuation, above and beyond the flux and reflux of phenomena. In this state of mind, the Dionysian, they took conscience of the identity of all lives in the one universal Life, they broke down the barriers which the fact of individuation had set up, and saw only one universal life-process in its eternity, manifesting itself in the fact of individuation, but superior to it, because confined within no limits, because universal and unchanging and eternal. In the Dionysian state of mind, becoming conscious of the identity of his individual life with all life, with the whole of nature, with the eternal world-process itself, man exclaimed : “ Life, I love thee, I desire thee, for thou art eternal.”

Thus the Greeks were neither pessimists nor optimists ; they were above both pessimism and

optimism ; for them pessimism and optimism ceased to be, and were confounded in a higher state, in an Apollinian and Dionysian, or rather in a state which combined both the Apollinian and Dionysian visions of life. This combination of Apollinian and Dionysian wisdom was reached in Greek tragedy, and above all in the choir of satyrs, so much appreciated by the Greeks. The satyr, of half-human, half-animal creation, represented the return to nature, to primitive savagery, where culture was unknown. The choir of satyrs, by means of dancing and music, roused the spectators to a condition of ecstatic frenzy in which the identity of the whole of nature seemed to be realised, in which the barriers artificially set up by the fact of individuation were broken down ; and at the same time, while the spectators were celebrating the return to nature, and the eternity of nature, and the identity of all nature, was communicated the glorious and radiant vision of the god Dionysus, offering himself to the assembled mass. Thus the Apollinian mystery celebrated by the choir of satyrs gave birth to a Dionysian vision of the god, radiant ideal above humanity. In this supreme moment Apollinian and Dionysian wisdom were confounded in a common ecstasy.

The perusal by Nietzsche of Schopenhauer's master-work must have convinced him that Schopenhauer was deeply impressed by the truth conveyed in the Apollinian vision. Schopenhauer's fundamental thought is the essential identity of all life, as emanation of the universal and primordial Will, and the highest wisdom is attained by him who, breaking down the barrier set up by the fact of individuation, raises himself above the sphere of phenomena subjected to the law of sufficient reason, and realises



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the identity of all life as confounded in the universal Will of which the world of phenomena is the manifestation. Pursuing his investigations further, and had he not been so exclusively devoted to Greek philology, Nietzsche would have discovered that the Eastern philosophy, from which Schopenhauer's learned so much, enunciated the same idea quite independently of the Greeks. "And Krishna says : Know that this science alone is valid which affirms an unique and eternal essence in all beings, the undivided in the divided. For he does but see, he who perceives all beings as like himself." <sup>1</sup>

But the Apollinian vision of life, which was used by the Greeks as a means of strengthening life, of adding to its beauty, of celebrating its triumphs, was used by Schopenhauer to an end diametrically opposite. According to the philosopher of Frankfurt, it is only when we have realised the universal solidarity which binds us to the rest of nature that we are able to fully fathom the depths of human suffering and human desolation ; and the conception of the identity of all life, celebrated by the Greeks in the choir of satyrs, becomes, in the mind of Schopenhauer, the main incitement to a total negation, not only of life, but of all wish to live.

Nietzsche accepted the pessimism of Schopenhauer. He, too, saw in the world-process a gigantic evil ; he, too, could have repeated : "Das Leben ist das grösste Verbrechen." He saw in the philosophy of Schopenhauer the salutary counterblast to the "philistine optimism" ("philisterhafter Optimismus") of which Strauss was the chief representative. The optimist school saw in the world-process the work

<sup>1</sup> "Bhagavata-Gîtâ," chap. xviii. Cited in "Sanctuaires et Paysages d'Asie," p. 158, by A. Chevrillon (Paris, 1905).



of an all-pervading Reason, which abstract entity they substituted for the former anthropomorphic deity. Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, saw in the world-process no trace of reason. For the disciple as for the master the world is unjustifiable from the point of view of pure reason. The one universal and immutable law is that of fatality. To this view Nietzsche always adhered. He never ceased to proclaim that, from the standpoint of reason, life is an absurdity, an endless struggle, an unnecessary suffering, ruled by the iron hand of Fate. We are unable to agree with M. Emile Faguet who, in other respects, has written so admirable and sympathetic a work on Nietzsche,<sup>1</sup> that the latter suffered, in the early part of his career, from a "romantic diathesis," and that his later career was in some respects a contradiction of his earlier one. Rather are we inclined to the view, based on the account of the evolution of Nietzsche's thought given by his sister,<sup>2</sup> and on a study of his own writings, that his position with regard to the fundamental questions of philosophy, in a word his "Weltanschauung," did not vary from the time of the publication of "Die Geburt der Tragödie" until his illness in 1889. With regard to his change of front concerning Schopenhauer, we believe that when Nietzsche wrote "Schopenhauer als Erzieher" in the "Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen," in 1874, he did not realise the meaning of the conclusions drawn by Schopenhauer from premises which both held in common. As regards the breach with Richard Wagner, we are inclined to think Nietzsche very mistaken in the view taken by him of the tendencies

<sup>1</sup> E. Faguet : "En lisant Nietzsche" (Paris, 1904).

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche : "Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches," 2 Bände, iv. Teile (Naumann, Leipzig).

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of the Wagnerian drama, but although he changed his conception of Wagner, he did not change his conception of life. The conception of life entertained by the author of "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" is the same as that of the author of "Der Fall Wagner." It was the view which he took of the position occupied by Wagner's art with regard to that conception which changed.

This digression as to the conception formed by Nietzsche of life, and of Greek thought and Greek culture, was necessary in order to have some comprehension of the reasons which led to his memorable breach with Wagner in 1876, and to his renunciation of his master, Schopenhauer. During the years of his professorate at Bâle, from 1869 to 1876, Nietzsche was on terms of the closest intimacy with Wagner and his wife. Very frequent were the visits which he paid them in their retreat at Tribschen, and these visits ever remained the sweetest and most beautiful reminiscence of Nietzsche's, and indeed of Wagner's, career. As we have said, Nietzsche was full of enthusiasm for Wagner's work, which he heralded as the revival, in modern form, of the Greek tragedy. He interested himself especially in the scheme propounded by Wagner for founding a German national theatre at Bayreuth, and his essay on "Richard Wagner at Bayreuth," published in 1876 as the fifth of the "Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen," was destined to assist the propaganda in aid of this scheme. Wagner, on the other hand, found in Nietzsche a friend of the highest and most powerful intellect, of quite extraordinary qualities, and of a character, as M. Henri Lichtenberger expresses it, "d'une trempe peu commune." Probably, in Wagner's eyes, here was the ideal disciple, such as every great



master fondly hopes to find, the continuator of the great work commenced, and which neither Richard Wagner nor Friedrich Nietzsche was destined to find.

As a matter of fact, Nietzsche's enthusiasm for Wagner, both before and during the period of the Tribschen intimacy, was never of a blind or uncritical description. The two dramas of the master which he really admired were the *Meistersinger* and *Tristan and Isolde*. It seems evident, from certain remarks made by him in his notebook during the years 1870-1872—that is to say, during those two years in which he was no less than twenty-three times Wagner's guest at Tribschen—that Nietzsche was conscious of certain important differences, both in the domain of philosophy and in that of art, between himself and Wagner.<sup>1</sup> During his frequent visits to Tribschen, he was under the influence of the powerful personality of Wagner, who captivated him, chained him, seduced him. On the other hand, Nietzsche was Wagner's most valued friend. "First comes Cosima," used Wagner to say, "and then you. And then a long distance separates all the others." It must be remembered, too, that the publication of Nietzsche's essay on "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," in 1876, was of great value to Wagner. This essay is recognised by the most orthodox Wagnerian circles as being one of the best studies of the master ever published.

The question is: Did Nietzsche change, or did Wagner change, or did only Nietzsche's conception of Wagner change? We have already expressed the opinion that Nietzsche's convictions underwent no

<sup>1</sup> E. Förster-Nietzsche: "Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches," ii. 853.



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change in themselves. As to Wagner, we are inclined to think that the author of *Parsifal* had certainly modified some of the ideas which inspired him in writing *Tristan and Isolde* and *Siegfried*. The atheist Wagner had become, if not an orthodox Christian, certainly a mystic. But *Parsifal* had not yet appeared at the time of the rupture with Nietzsche in 1876. Therefore we can see no other reason for Nietzsche's action than a change of position in regard to the Wagnerian ideal, as considered in the light of his own ideal. But the rupture was not so sudden as certain think. It was not the affair of a moment, a *coup-de-théâtre* so to speak. We have said that even during the period of the Tribschen intimacy, Nietzsche's position with regard to certain of Wagner's works, notably *Tannhäuser*, was one of more or less mild hostility. But, if Nietzsche cherished any hopes, during the period of the Tribschen intimacy, of converting Wagner to his own views, those hopes were speedily dispelled when Wagner emigrated from Tribschen to Bayreuth. From this moment on, the seduction exercised by Wagner's commanding and captivating personality disappeared. Nietzsche became increasingly conscious of the fact that Wagner was changing, or, at any rate, that his conception of Wagner was changing. Far from being the reviver of Greek ideals which he had dreamed, Wagner seemed to him to have been "captured by the Germans," as he puts it, to be ministering to the popular vainglory following on the triumphs of 1870, to be pandering to German chauvinism and German mysticism, to be seeking for success at the expense of his own convictions. In 1876, before going to Bayreuth to assist at the solemn celebrations of the *Nibelungenring*, Nietzsche determined to gather

together all the tender memories, all the cherished souvenirs, of that friendship consecrated at Tribschen, to write, as it were, a sort of memorial tribute, not to the real Wagner, but to the idealised Wagner, to the Wagner of his dreams, of his hopes, to the Wagner who had disappeared. The last of the "Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen" is consecrated to "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth." But this appreciation, this glorification of the master, must be understood as a tribute to the Wagner of the past, to the Wagner whom Nietzsche had imagined, who had, perhaps, never existed but in the hopes and dreams of Nietzsche. It was the last tribute paid at the parting of the ways.

Nietzsche was bitterly disappointed by the representation of the "Ring" in 1876. Wagner, like every Over-Man, like every overwhelming genius, was accustomed only to rigid obedience and respect from those who surrounded him. He was much angered by Nietzsche's conduct on this occasion. The breach was completed two years later by the publication of Nietzsche's book: "Menschliches, Allzumenschliches." Wagner regarded Nietzsche's conduct as the basest of desertions; he came to look upon his former bosom friend as an unscrupulous intellectual adventurer, who had not hesitated to make use of his name and reputation and friendship in order to attain for himself a certain degree of fame. The flame was fanned further by attacks on Nietzsche of particular violence which appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter*.

The year 1876 marked the turning point in the intellectual career of Nietzsche. He had been the fervent worshipper of Schopenhauer, the beloved friend of Wagner. Schopenhauer was dead, and the parting was thus less bitter than the separation from Wagner. Nietzsche had come to the critical moment



of his life as thinker and philosopher. Hitherto he had been searching for himself, searching for an ideal which might satisfy his conception of life. He had thought to find that ideal in Schopenhauer and Wagner ; and he found out that the idols he had been worshipping were false gods, that they represented, not the ideal of beauty, and of strength, and of power, and of Apollinian and Dionysian wisdom, which he had discovered among the Greeks, but the very opposite. He saw them now in a quite different light : he saw them as representing modern civilisation in all its weariness, in all its disgust of life, in its exhaustion, in its degeneracy. The bitter pessimism of Schopenhauer appeared to him the logical outcome of that nihilism which seems to mark the decay of European culture to-day. The art of Wagner seemed to him to represent life under its most nervous and tired aspect ; he saw in that art a skilful means of administering a narcotic to overwrought minds, of calming and drugging them with all the resources of a magician. And from this moment the contrast, the violent, poignant contrast, between his ideal of life, the ideal of Olympian beauty and power, and the ideal of modern civilisation, with its pessimisms, its disgust of life, its longing for the nirvana, was to haunt Nietzsche night and day, giving him a sense of isolation in a world so totally different in its aspirations.

But not for a moment did Nietzsche hesitate. The ideals of to-day and yesterday and of the last nineteen centuries were not his ideals. In the categorical imperative, in the Sermon on the Mount, in the democratic movement of to-day, he saw the signs of decadency. His ideal was an ideal in which none of those conceptions which the world to-day regards as beyond controversy could find a place. Very well ;



he would declare war on modern civilisation in all its forms. In an age of democracy, of sentimentalism, of mysticism, he would preach the gospel of ultra-aristocratism, of hatred instead of love, of immoralism instead of morality, of egoism instead of altruism, of hardness of heart instead of sympathy, of art as the justification of life instead of the moral law. He recognised now that he had been living in slippery places, that he had been in real danger of succumbing to the universal degeneracy which he would henceforth combat without mercy, that he had been seduced by false charmers, that he had attributed to Schopenhauer and Wagner ideas which they never entertained. His sincerity, and the loyalty and sublime disinterestedness of his character, had led him, and it always led him, to idealise his friends, to see in them something which they were not, something more than they possessed. It was thus that he had idealised Schopenhauer and Wagner. It was thus that he was destined subsequently to see in Frau Andreas Lou-Salomé qualities which she never possessed. It was thus that he was led to estimate friends like Herr Rohde and Dr Rée at far above their real value. This faculty of idealising his friends was destined often to lead him into very painful positions.

Thus we find Nietzsche having completed the search for himself. We find him at war with all the ideals of modern civilisation. It is not the ideal which he has set forth in "*Die Geburt der Tragödie*" which has been modified. But he has realised that that ideal is the diametrical opposite of the ideal of to-day; that his ideal is an ideal of exuberant life, and of beauty, and of power, and of strength; whereas the ideal of to-day is an anæmic ideal, the fruit of degeneracy, of nihilism, of weariness, of neuropathy.

In all modern institutions, in all that constitutes the pride of our modernity, in the State, in the different religions, in the moral law, in modern science, Nietzsche sees the obstacle of the establishment of his ideal. In temperament and constitution a contemporary of Æschylus or Pericles, he finds himself transplanted into a hostile atmosphere saturated with Christianity, with moralism and Hegelianism and romanticism.

In 1878 Nietzsche published "*Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*." But already, before this publication, his health had become seriously undermined. In 1869 he had had a bad fall from a horse, which had laid him up for a considerable time. In 1870 he served in the Franco-German War, in the Ambulance Department ; and his health had again broken down under the strain. The stress of his university work in the intervening years, the emotion caused by his rupture with Wagner, and by his breach with all ideas hitherto held sacred as being steps towards the attainment of the ultimate great Ideal, and which he was now obliged to recognise as being diametrically opposed to the realisation of that ultimate ideal, again brought on a complete breakdown in 1876, a breakdown in which the serious illness of 1870 also had its share. Nietzsche had been insufficiently treated in 1870 ; he had recommenced work too soon ; and he had overworked. He had to pay a heavy debt now. In 1876 he was compelled to take a year's leave, most of which he passed at Sorrento. In 1877 he recommenced his professional duties at Bâle, and in 1878 he published "*Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*." But his university work was too heavy for him, his health became rapidly worse, and in 1879 he was forced, to his deep regret, to resign his professorship.



The severance of his connection with the University of Bâle, where he had been active during ten years, was the outward and visible sign of that more profound separation which Nietzsche now effected between himself and all modern culture. His health was very seriously undermined. He was the victim of violent and frequent headaches, which left him nearly paralysed with pain. Between January 1880 and January 1881 he counted no fewer than one hundred and eighteen such attacks. He passed the winters in the south, the summers generally in the mountain air of Switzerland. During three years, from 1879 to 1882, he lay, as it were, between life and death, in perpetual physical pain, but never losing courage for an instant, disputing every inch of ground with his malady heroically, battling resolutely for health. These years of physical suffering and illness were also the years of his most profound intellectual discouragement, the years of the most complete negation. Nietzsche himself was fully aware of the gravity of the physical and moral crisis which he was going through. According to him, there was an intimate connection between the two. He had been afflicted, during the years 1869-1876, with the Wagnerian diathesis, so to speak. He had been nearly conquered by ideals which were the contrary, in reality, of his ideal, and which he had represented as being identical. He had been the victim of illusions, due to the excessive confidence and exaggerated faculty of idealisation which he possessed. But this worship of Wagner and Schopenhauer was not natural to him. It was a worship given under a misapprehension as to the tendencies of these two masters. And now was the period of intellectual emancipation. His physical suffering stood in co-relation to his moral suffering ; or



his moral suffering stood in co-relation to his physical suffering. Certain it is that the years of severe illness, from 1876-1882, which were destined to end in fairly complete recovery, were also the years of moral suffering, destined to end in his entire emancipation from Schopenhauer and Wagner and the whole of modern civilisation and all the aspirations which he had cherished up to the present, and which were so many obstacles to the attainment of life in all its power and plenitude and beauty, which was always the ideal of Nietzsche.

We can trace the crisis through which Nietzsche was passing, in his works ; and we see the effect of the physical malady on his intellectual evolution. In 1878 he published " Menschliches, Allzumenschliches." In no book has he been so coldly, so entirely negative as in this one. Every ideal which humanity has been accustomed to look upon with reverence and respect, as something beyond controversy, as something higher and more durable than itself, is coldly and calmly—or violently—flung aside. " Der Wanderer und sein Schatten " followed in 1879, as the completion of the first work—a book which is full of sadness, with its depicting of the " Wanderer " who searches among the labyrinth of the forest to find his way, accompanied always by his shadow, which haunts him. But already in " Morgenröthe " (1881) we see the signs of improvement in health. The ferocious negation of the " Human, all too Human " is gradually giving way to a more positive ideal. " Die fröhliche Wissenschaft " (1882) is the herald of recovery, written in a strain of gaiety and optimism, in the " most beautiful of all Januaries," which Nietzsche passed at Genoa. Nietzsche himself writes in the preface : " Thankfulness flows from it as a stream,

thankfulness for that which was the least expected, the thankfulness of a man who has recovered—for this recovery was what was least expected. ‘The gay science’: this title means the saturnalia of a mind which has long been oppressed by an overwhelming weight, which has remained patient, strong, self-possessed, never yielding, but without any hope; and now it finds itself all of a sudden face to face with hope, with the hope of recovery, it is intoxicated by the hope of recovery.”<sup>1</sup>

Released from the duties attached to his professorship at Bâle, Nietzsche’s life was henceforth to be that of a wanderer. Even as in his intellectual evolution he was for ever peregrinating along the road of knowledge, ever seeking to quench his thirst for knowledge, ever curious of things new, so in his manner of living he was henceforth to be permanently on the move, a wanderer without a house, spending his summers mostly in the Engadine, in the village of Sils-Maria, and his winters on the shores of the Mediterranean. He had an intense love for the south, with its sunshine and warmth and the balmy breezes from the sea. Venice, where his friend and faithful disciple, Herr Peter Gast, lived for some time, Rapallo, Nice, were his favourite resorts. In 1883 he visited Rome with his sister, and stayed in a house on the Piazza Barberini. “On a loggia, high above the Piazza, from which a

<sup>1</sup> “Die Dankbarkeit strömt fortwährend aus, als ob eben das Unerwartetste geschehen sei, die Dankbarkeit eines Genesenden—denn die Genesung war dieses Unerwartetste. ‘Fröhliche Wissenschaft’: das bedeutet die Saturnalien eines Geistes, der einem furchtbaren langen Drucke geduldig widerstanden hat—geduldig, streng, kalt, ohne sich zu unterwerfen, aber ohne Hoffnung—und der jetzt mit Einem Male von der Hoffnung angefallen wird, von der Hoffnung auf Gesundheit, von der Trunkenheit der Genesung” (“Werke,” v. 3).



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view of Rome is obtained, and where one hears the gentle murmur of the fountain beneath, was composed that most solitary of all songs that have ever been sung, the Song of the Night." This refers to that exquisite "Nachtlied" of Zarathustra :

"Nacht ist es : nun reden alle springenden Brunnen. Und auch meine Seele ist ein springender Brunnen.

Nacht ist es : nun erst erwachen alle Lieder der Liebenden. Und auch meine Seele ist das Lied eines Liebenden." <sup>1</sup>

The visit to Rome, to the eternal, unique, incomparable city, inspired several passages of Nietzsche's master-work. The sight of the ruins of the majestic Basilica of Constantine, the passing of a procession of white-robed priests on the Monte Aventino, the gigantic dimensions of St Peter's, the cloisters of San Giovanni Laterano, all impressed him, as they impress everyone, and impressed him the more because his was an essentially impressive nature. Another city which delighted him was Genoa. It was in Genoa that "Die fröhliche Wissenschaft" was composed. Its palaces, its history, its situation, its climate, even his hosts, charmed him. He writes : "I see here the faces of generations which are past and gone ; the whole district is full of the portraits of brave, bold and proud men. These lived and desired not only to live, but to live on, always ; I see this wish expressed in the construction of their houses, built and decorated not merely for the passing hour, but for centuries." <sup>2</sup> Venice charmed him perhaps

<sup>1</sup> "It is night : now begin the bubbling wells to speak. And my soul, too, is as a bubbling well.

It is night : now begin all the songs of the lovers. And my soul, too, is as the song of a lover.

<sup>2</sup> E. Förster-Nietzsche : "Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches," ii. 363.



more than anything. The palaces, the silence, the Piazza San Marco with the Campanile and the Palace of the Doges, and the doves, the poetical atmosphere of the whole town, which seemed to transplant him into another age, all filled his artistic soul with joy. He had the further pleasure of having his devoted friend, Herr Peter Gast, there—Gast, whose music conquered him, and who was ever ready to do some service for the venerated master. Rapallo, on the Italian Riviera, was the scene of the composition of the first part of “Also sprach Zarathustra,” and as such it occupies an important place in Nietzsche’s life. He describes the origin of the idea of Zarathustra in his brain: “In the morning (February 1883) I began the ascent in a southerly direction of the lovely road towards Zoagli, which led me past Pini and brought me to a point commanding a grand view of the sea; in the afternoon I made the tour of the whole Bay of Santa Margherita as far as Portofino. During these two walks, the whole conception of Zarathustra presented itself to me, especially the type of Zarathustra himself.”<sup>1</sup> Later on he frequented Nice, which always charmed him. It was in Nice that the third part of “Also sprach Zarathustra” was composed (1883-1884). “Under the halcyon sky of Nice, which shone for the first time on my life, I found the third Zarathustra. That decisive part which bears the title: ‘Concerning the old and the new tables,’ was composed during a most difficult climb from the station to the wonderful Moorish cliff Eza.” For Nietzsche, life and beauty were synonymous with southern climates and the southern sun. Italy was

<sup>1</sup> “Auf diesen beiden Wegen fiel mir der ganze erste Zarathustra ein, vor allem Zarathustra selber, als Typus: richtiger, er überfiel mich.”

for him the unique country, where alone life was rendered sweet, whose music was charming, where alone art was understood and cherished.

“ Morgenröthe ” had already breathed a new spirit. Its title was suggestive, as being the dawn of a new era :

“ Es giebt so viele Morgenröthe  
Die noch nicht geleuchtet haben.”

But a new morning sky was heralded in this work, where the first streaks of the coming day are perceived. Then follows “ Die fröhliche Wissenschaft,” breathing the spirit of gratitude and of hope and of renewed confidence in life. And then followed that marvellous burst of lyrical enthusiasm, “ Also sprach Zarathustra.” It is a song of triumph, the song of the wanderer who has returned home at last, who was lost and is found, who has fought the fight and is victorious. It is a song of victory and of faith, of hope and affirmation, and of life and love.

The poem of Zarathustra contains four published parts, written between January 1883 and January 1885 ; a fifth part was projected by Nietzsche, and destined to end with the death of Zarathustra. Nietzsche has left five plans of this fifth part, none of which he ever put into execution.

As we have said, since the resignation of his chair at the University of Bâle left him free, Nietzsche led a wandering and roaming life, wanderings which were mainly determined by the necessities of his health. It is astonishing to contemplate the philosophical and literary activity of Nietzsche during this period of restlessness, in spite of all obstacles. The publication of “ Zarathustra ” was followed by that of “ Jenseits von Gut und Böse,” in August 1886. The work “ Zur Genealogie der Moral ” was written and pub-



lished in 1887. The year 1888, the last year of his intellectual career, witnessed the production of "Der Fall Wagner," of "Götzendämmerung," of "Der Antichrist," and of "Der Wille zur Macht." "Dernière moisson, moisson féconde."

But during all these years which followed the physical and moral crisis of 1876-1881, the position of Nietzsche in the world was one of growing isolation. The ever-increasing separation, the ever-widening breach between him and his times, the divergences of their respective aspirations, the growing hardness and temerity of his views, all led, bit by bit, to an estrangement between him and the world. The quarrel with Wagner, with the best-beloved friend, in whom all his fondest hopes were placed, left a gap in his life which never could be filled. His wandering life, his inability, through reasons of health, to settle down in a house of his own, prevented him from taking root anywhere. His tendency to idealise all those with whom he came into closer contact, to see in his friends not so much what they really were as what he wished and believed them to be, led him into some bitter disappointments, the bitterness of which was augmented by the extreme sensitiveness and delicacy of his nature. And yet how he longed for a friend, for a real, true friend and confidant, for a disciple in whom he could place implicit trust, whom he could rely on to continue the work so bravely commenced by him! There is a passage in his private diary which expresses this secret yearning of all his later life:

"Wer die grössten Geschenke zu vergeben hat, sucht nach Solchen, welche sie zu nehmen verstehen—er sucht vielleicht umsonst. Er wirft endlich sein Geschenk weg. Dergleichen gehört zur geheimen Geschichte und Verzweiflung der reichsten Seelen: es



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ist vielleicht der unverständlichste und schwermütigste aller Unglücksfälle auf Erden.”<sup>1</sup>

The constant concentration of his mind on the most exalted and most intricate problems which confront humanity, added to the growing isolation which he himself felt more than anyone. Not with impunity can one be for ever absorbed in the lofty question of the origin and validity of all the tables of values—of metaphysical and moral and scientific values—which humanity possesses or has possessed. Nietzsche himself writes of the conception of the Everlasting Return of all things, which dawned on him one superb summer morning in the forest of Silvaplana in the Engadine, that it originated “at 6000 feet above the sea, and far higher above all human things.” This accurately represents the state of Nietzsche’s mind. He lived in an atmosphere which was all his own. He concentrated that powerful brain of his on the highest and deepest problems, which he perpetually meditated. He had thrown overboard all the values which humanity has revered up till to-day. He lived, as he himself expresses it, “jenseits von Gut und Böse,” beyond and above things good and bad, beyond and above all things human. He had ever before his mind’s eye the glowing vision of the future, of a new world, of a new humanity, regenerated and purified and beautified, of the Over-Man, incarnation of beauty and strength and power, of light-heartedness and *insouciance*, of life in all its vigour and plenitude. He had elevated, by a superhuman effort of his

<sup>1</sup> “He who has the most precious gifts to bestow seeks those who are worthy to receive them—and seeks perhaps in vain. At last he throws those gifts aside. This tragedy appertains to the secret history and despair of the greatest minds ; it is perhaps the most incomprehensible and melancholy of all tragedies on earth.”

indomitable will, his mind far, far above all those things which interested his contemporaries ; he had attained those regions of lofty serenity and great silence which are also the regions of eternal snow, and alone, in that great silence under the stars, he stood contemplating the accumulation of ruins, of tears and sufferings, of joy and hope, of victories and defeats, which, far beneath him in the valleys, constitute the history of the world and of humanity.

But it must not be concluded that Nietzsche was of a cold and haughty disposition. Few men have possessed, according to the accounts of all who were privileged to know him, a more charming and lovable character. Nothing was further from him than vanity or arrogance, and, if he instinctively repulsed those whose manner was displeasing to his excessively refined taste, he was, towards his friends, full of kindness and charm and thoughtfulness. If his intellectual isolation was irksome to him, if he was a man who yearned for friends and yet found none worthy of him, if he was, of course, aware of his immeasurable superiority to all those who surrounded him, yet he never was anything but cheerful, a charming companion, and filled with sympathy for all men and things. All those who met him at Sils-Maria, or on the Riviera, liked him and respected him. He was an altogether striking personality, in the presence of whom the trivialities and conventional banalities of daily conversation seemed out of place ; and in whose presence all boasting, all pretentiousness, all unreality were equally out of place. Nietzsche himself has maintained that he could at once detect, thanks to his extraordinary scent, any "physiological abnormality." Certain it is that those who, being physiologically or psychologically inferior, were admitted to his



presence, at once felt themselves probed to the bottom by the brilliant, piercing blue eyes of their interlocutor. Triviality and uncleanness, whether bodily or mental, were two things which could never stand in the presence of so delicate, cultured and aristocratic a soul as that of Friedrich Nietzsche.

Nietzsche was the greatest of idealists ; and his passionate idealism led him into grievous mistakes and blinded him as to the real merits and defects of his friends. He speaks of Herr Peter Gast, the faithful friend and disciple, as if Gast were a great musician, and he estimated him far higher than Wagner. He saw in Dr Rée, in Professor Erwin Rohde, in Frau Lou-Salomé, personages of a distinction which they were far from possessing. Nietzsche's generous nature was the opposite of those who are always ready to detract, to find out some little defect on which they may insist. Nietzsche saw in his friends nothing but perfection ; but bitter was the disappointment when at last the truth could no longer be concealed, and the veil fell from his eyes.

Nietzsche's was one of those natures which give themselves freely, lovingly, confidingly, disinterestedly ; and, like all such natures, he yearned for human sympathy and human love, for that same sympathy and love which he was ready and longing to give. This statement will surprise those who only know Nietzsche from some famous, oft-repeated aphorisms, such as his advice to " become hard," and his doctrine that the greatness of a man is to be measured by his capacity to inflict suffering. But in his private life Nietzsche appears as one of those ideal natures to whom might be applied the description by a French poet of Victor Hugo : " Dieu mit d'abord dans son cœur la grande bonté." We find him writing to a friend in need,



begging him to accept a small loan ; and when this is declined he writes sorrowfully to his sister : “ It would have made me richer had he only accepted it.” He writes of himself, and his testimony is abundantly confirmed : “ My experiences, even with those who have afforded bad experiences to everyone else, speak without exception in my favour ; I tamed every bear, I made the most ill-tempered amiable. During seven years that I was at the Bâle Pedagogium teaching Greek, I never had cause to inflict a single penalty ; the laziest worked willingly with me.”<sup>1</sup> He quarrelled violently with Wagner. He wrote against Wagner the bitterest of pamphlets. And yet he loved Wagner always : “ Den habe ich sehr geliebt,” he used to say, almost with tears. And when Wagner died at Venice, in 1883, he wrote to Frau Cosima Wagner the most beautiful and tender of letters.

“ In former days,” he wrote, “ you did not disdain to take my advice in a critical situation ; and now, when the news has just reached me that the *bitterest* has overtaken you, I know not how to give expression to my feelings, except by pouring them out entirely to you and only to you.

“ Not what you have lost, but what you now possess, is my dominant thought ; and there can be but few persons who can say with such depth of feeling : ‘ Even as it was my whole duty, all that I did for the sake of this beloved one, and nothing more—so is it also my whole reward.’

“ You have lived for one ideal, and sacrificed everything to that ideal ; and over and above your love for him who is no more, you understood and grasped the highest, that which all his love and all his hopes

<sup>1</sup> E. Förster-Nietzsche : “ Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches,” ii. 820.

embraced. You served *that*, you belong to *that*, as also does your name, for eternity—that which is immortal, which dies not with the body, although it is born with it.

“ Few have such aspirations ; and—of these few—who can realise them as you can ?

“ Thus it is that my thoughts go out to you to-day, and thus have I always thought of you, if from a far distance, of you who are the woman whom my heart most greatly reveres.” <sup>1</sup>

His love for all that is artistic, all that is beautiful, his passion for music—“ I know no difference between music and tears,” he writes ; “ I know that happiness which cannot think of the south without a slight shudder of timidity ”—are these the signs of a brutal and violent nature ? There are a thousand passages from his works which reveal the tenderness of every fibre of his nature. Could anyone but a delicate and sentimental nature have written, as he wrote, of Venice ?—

“ An der Brücke stand  
Jüngst ich in brauner Nacht.  
Fernher kam Gesang :  
Goldener Tropfen quoll's  
Über die zitternde Fläche weg.  
Gondeln, Lichter, Musik—  
Trunken schwamm's in die Dämmerung hinaus. . . .  
Meine Seele, ein Saitenspiel,  
Sang sich, unsichtbar berührt,  
Heimlich ein Gondellied dazu,  
Zitternd vor bunter Seeligkeit.  
—Hörte Jemand ihr zu ? . . . ”

Alas ! no one remained to listen to this song of a great soul. Solitude, certainly, Nietzsche loved. “ Oh Einsamkeit ! Du meine Heimat Einsamkeit ! ”

<sup>1</sup> E. Förster-Nietzsche : “ Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches,” ii. 863.



he wrote. But he felt also the want of a friend in whom he could confide, who could understand him and, what was for him more important, his ideal. "How many years have elapsed," he writes to his sister, "since I last heard a word that really appealed to me, that went to my heart." "My dear old friend," he writes again, already in 1884, to one of the comrades of his youth, "when I read your last letter it seemed to me as if you shook my hand with a melancholy look, as if you would say: 'How is it possible that we have to-day so few things in common, that we live as if in different worlds! And yet, long ago!' Thus, dear friend, goes it with all those who are dear to me: all seems finished and past. One sees each other still, one talks in order to break the silence, one writes letters in order to break the silence. But I know the voice of truth, and I hear it saying: 'Friend Nietzsche, you are *alone*.' " In 1887 he writes to his sister: "O heaven, how lonely I am to-day! . . . I have no one with whom I can laugh, no one with whom I can take even a cup of tea, no one to comfort me!" His friend, Baron Heinrich von Stein, died early, and his loss was very keenly felt by Nietzsche. With Professor Rohde he had quarrelled, his friend Baron von Gersdorff was seldom with him, and his sister, the friend and confidante of a lifetime, had gone out to Paraguay with her husband, Herr Bernhard Förster. Few perhaps can understand what it must have cost the author of "Zarathustra" to have perpetually to frequent the society of the amiable nonentities, English, French or German, who filled the hotels and boarding-houses of the Engadine and the Riviera. And yet he was always cheerful, always full of that charming courtesy which was peculiar to him, always ready with a kind word or



with the offer of a service, always popular. The people he thus met never understood who or what he was. "He was a most delightful companion, very intelligent, but nothing of a great mind," was the opinion expressed by one person. Nietzsche accepted this misunderstanding cheerfully. "It is my mask," he used to say laughingly with regard to his modesty of demeanour. He knew that it was not such people who would be called upon to judge him. "The day after to-morrow first belongs to me," he wrote ; and he knew that his work was for those for whom it was destined—for the chosen few, and for them only.

The whole work of Nietzsche is that of an artist. As his sister truly says, sunshine and blue sky were necessities of life to him. The beauties of nature, the beauties of art and of music, who appreciated them, loved them, wished for them, more deeply than Nietzsche? The poem of Zarathustra was composed partly at Rapallo, in view of the lovely bay of Santa Margherita, partly in the Eternal City, with its memories and treasures, partly in Nice, "under that halcyon sky," and with the blue expanse of water beneath. The idea of the Everlasting Return occurred to him in the midst of a forest, among the grandeurs of the High Engadine, at a height of 6000 feet. The "Gaya Scienza" is all saturated with the atmosphere of the "most beautiful of all Januaries," passed under the Italian sky at Genoa. Nietzsche loved the sunshine and the stars, and the moonlight on the lagoons of Venice, and the soft caressing music of the south which brings with it a gentle breeze of Mediterranean air.

As we have said, the year 1888 was the busiest, as it was the last, of Nietzsche's career as thinker. He wrote "Der Fall Wagner," the "Götzendäm-

merung," "Der Antichrist," and the fragments of "Der Wille zur Macht," which have been published. With regard to the latter work, which contains the entire philosophy of Nietzsche in a nutshell, it cannot be too deeply deplored that the breakdown of the author's health prevented its completion. Its contents are, indeed, already contained in the poem of Zarathustra. But Nietzsche was the first to understand the difficulties which would arise concerning the interpretation of the latter work. Already in 1883, when "Zarathustra" was finished, Nietzsche seems to have planned the writing of a new volume which should contain the exposition, in prose and in a more methodical style, of the ideas expressed in lyrical language by Zarathustra. In 1886 he wrote out a plan for this new work, to be composed in four books. But in 1887 he revised this plan, and finally determined the composition of this new work as follows :—

Der Wille zur Macht: Versuch einer Umwertung aller Werte

- i. Der europäische Nihilismus.
- ii. Kritik der höchsten Werte.
- iii. Prinzip einer neuen Wertsetzung.
- iv. Zucht und Züchtung.

This plan was carried out, and the work was published posthumously by the Nietzsche-Archiv at Weimar.<sup>1</sup> The plan, however, formed but part of a much larger scheme for exposing his philosophy in all its details, which Nietzsche was unfortunately unable to complete.

<sup>1</sup> The following is the translation of the title :—

The Will of Power : the Transvaluation of all Values

- i. The European Nihilism.
- ii. Critique of the Highest Values.
- iii. Principles of a new Evaluation.
- iv. Rearing and Selection.



The year 1888 was one of extraordinary cerebral activity. It also happened that the summer, which Nietzsche spent as usual at Sils-Maria, was one in which exceptionally bad weather prevailed. Nietzsche's health, always far from robust, was unfavourably influenced by these climatic conditions. Although, since his comparative recovery in 1882, he had had no return of the violent attacks of pain to which he was formerly a martyr, he had been obliged to take constant precautions in view of his health, which remained in a weak condition. Unfortunately he had no one to look after him and to care for him. The solitude in which he was plunged, and the constant concentration of his mind, and the vertiginous heights to which his thoughts perpetually soared, all combined to make him neglect a hygienic régime indispensable to him, to fatigue his already somewhat overwrought nervous system, to keep him in a state of unceasing cerebral tension. Everything seemed to combine against him, in this his final year of activity. First, came a renewed and very bitter attack from the Bayreuth ring, who had never forgiven, and never could forgive, "Der Fall Wagner." This attack, ungenerous itself, was made increasingly bitter by the fact that it was published in a musical review whose administrator was Herr E. Fritsch, of Leipzig, Nietzsche's own publisher. He had an increasing sense of loneliness, of isolation. Especially did the absurd silence of the entire German world of thought with regard to his labours fill him with anger and sorrow. He complains to his sister of this "feeling of utter loneliness, this want of sympathy, this general ingratitude towards me. . . . Why is there no sign of approval, no understanding me, no cordial appreciation?"



Nietzsche sought refuge from his woes, the neglect of his compatriots, the want of friendship and understanding, in renewed work. And he worked hard, and he forced his brain to concentrate itself for a violent effort, as if he had conscience of the fact that it was to be a last effort; and increasing nervousity and insomnia ensued as a natural result. The sleeping draughts of chloral, to which he had long accustomed himself, became ever larger and ever larger, as his cerebral tension increased, and the insomnia became more difficult to cope with. In the course of his wanderings, Nietzsche had made the acquaintance of a Dutch gentleman from Java, who recommended him, as sleeping-draught and general remedy for hypertension of the nervous system, a drug which he had himself discovered in the East. Nietzsche, foolishly enough, determined to try this drug, a concoction which medical science had never analysed. And the effects were good, so good that Nietzsche slept long under them and awoke with an ever-increasingly confused brain. This was the state of the man at the close of 1888. Overworked, racked with worry, in ill-health, sleeping only by means of enormous doses of chloral and of this Eastern drug, with his whole nervous system strained to breaking-point—it would have required the constant care and affection of a mother or sister or friend, who could have comforted him, nursed him, cheered his solitude, afforded him light and agreeable distractions, to avoid the coming blow.

Alas! Nietzsche was alone. After a bad summer in the Engadine, which increased his bad health and bad spirits, he arrived at Turin, *en route* for the Riviera. At Turin he found the weather most favourable; he cheered up under the influence of an

Italian autumn, and we find him writing in a most cheerful frame of mind to his sister in Paraguay. He began, not content with producing "Der Fall Wagner," the "Götzendämmerung," and that most important work "Der Wille zur Macht," one after another in the same year, to write an intimate diary, which he entitled "Ecce Homo." He begins this diary thus :

"On this most important of days, when not only are the grapes brown, but when all is ripe, suddenly a gleam of sunshine fell on me and lighted up my whole life : I looked back, I looked up, I never saw at one and the same time so many good things. Not for nothing have I just completed my forty-fourth year—it was well for me to bury it, for what has lived during that year is saved and is immortal. The first book of the Transvaluation of all Values, the Song of Zarathustra, the Twilight of the Idols,<sup>1</sup> my essay in 'philosophy by means of the hammer,'—all are the gifts of this one year, indeed of the last three months ! How would it be possible for me not to be thankful for my whole life ? And thus will I recount the story of my life."<sup>2</sup>

In this state of hypertension, of over-excitement, nothing could have been worse than to have caused Nietzsche irritation. This, however, is precisely what he encountered. Instead of that loving sympathy which a home or kind friends could and should have prepared for him, he found himself exposed to one attack after the other. His old and venerated friend, Frau Malwida von Meysenbug, commenced by attacking him on the subject of

<sup>1</sup> "Götzendämmerung."

<sup>2</sup> E. Förster-Nietzsche : "Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches," ii. 892.



“Der Fall Wagner.” Then followed that calumnious attack by an obscure member of the Bayreuth ring in the *Musikalische Wochenblatt*, of which Nietzsche’s publisher was the administrator. Encouraged by this attack on the part of the Bayreuth ring, and by the silence with which it was received—for Nietzsche was unable to reply and no one came forward in his defence—other enemies, of the baser sort, came forward, with all sorts of anonymous letters, containing statements concerning Nietzsche’s sister in Paraguay and her husband, Herr Förster. This last method of causing annoyance was also, perhaps, the most effective. The thought that his sister, the dearest friend and confidante of his whole lifetime, was turning against him, incited by her husband, was the final drop in the cup already full to brimming over. In the midst of this solitude, attacked on all sides, unable to defend himself, exasperated beyond measure by his foes, rendered desperate by the thought of his sister’s abandonment, Nietzsche wrote on, wrote on, forcing his tired, weary eyes to work, forcing his tired, overwrought brain to work, stimulating the one with powerful spectacles, stimulating the other with chloral in ever-stronger doses—in order to obtain that sleep which would not come, and which was his sole refuge from all his worries and woes. It could not last. The brain, worked up to an impossible pitch, suddenly broke down; and a paralytic stroke put an end to Nietzsche’s career as thinker in the early days of 1889.

It has become customary—as was to be foreseen—to talk of Nietzsche as if a trace of insanity were to be found in all his works, as if the stroke which fell at Turin in January 1889 were but the culminating



point of a morbid state dating back some fifteen years, and which, according to this theory, was inherited by Nietzsche. In view of the attempt which has been made to discredit Nietzsche's work on the ground that it is the work of an insane person, and in view of the not unnatural success which has attended this attempt, especially, or exclusively, among the uninitiated—we say, not unnatural, for it is an easy and convenient way of refuting views which may be only with difficulty refuted by more serious arguments—we think it well to give a brief sketch of Nietzsche's history from the medical point of view.

Nietzsche belonged to a family in which exceptional longevity was the rule. Most of the brothers and sisters of his father, as also his grandfather, survived the age of seventy, and some of them attained eighty or even ninety years. The same rule of longevity prevailed in the family of his mother. On the other hand, not one single case of insanity, or of any mental aberration, is reported among any of his immediate ancestors or relations. Nietzsche's father, it is true, died at the early age of thirty-six, from softening of the brain. But this softening of the brain was caused by a fall down some stairs, which had occurred eleven months previously; and, Nietzsche being five years old when this accident happened, no further account need be taken of it. During his early life Nietzsche was gifted with exceptionally good health. His sister reports that, when, at the university as a student, he used to return in his riding-suit from a cross-country gallop, everyone admired the splendid build of his frame and the physical strength which it revealed. He never had a serious complaint of any sort, it seems, before 1869, when a fall from his

horse laid him up for a considerable time. Then came 1870 and the Franco-German War, in which Nietzsche served in the Ambulance Department. The severe strain of this winter campaign proved too much for him. He became seriously ill, and, without being properly cured or sufficiently rested, he resumed his arduous work as professor at Bâle. From this time onwards came constantly recurring headaches, of ever-increasing severity, till at last, as we have seen, he was compelled to abandon his professorship at Bâle. During two years he lay a martyr to his sufferings, but towards 1881 his health improved, and from 1881 to the time of his attack in 1889 he does not seem to have suffered from this complaint to any great extent. But his health was visibly undermined. It was only by means of the strictest hygienic régime, by constant changes of climate, that life was rendered more or less supportable. In this fragile state of his health, Nietzsche required a woman's care and constant affection; he required a doctor to supervise him, to prevent him from overworking himself. But, left to himself, Nietzsche subjected his brain to a work which, powerful as that brain was, it was nevertheless unable to cope with. And we must constantly bear in mind that Nietzsche was no mere coldly objective philosopher, but that his philosophy was inseparable from himself, from his life, that he *lived his ideas* in the most literal sense. By nature of an extremely delicate and sensitive disposition, his work filled him with an enthusiasm which it is hard to conceive. His state of mind after the completion of each part of the poem of Zarathustra was one of extraordinary excitement. He was himself Zarathustra, preaching, in terms of lyrical beauty, a new



gospel to the world. He saw himself uplifted above all humanity, soaring in the vast spaces and immense silence of the region of eternal snow, he saw the vision of the future before him, the radiant vision of the Over-Man, far above all things human, far removed from all that which humanity has venerated up till now, the creator of the new tables of the law, of the new values, of him who "is to mould centuries according to his image, as if they were wax." In a state like this, every fibre of a nervous system already overwrought by long and painful illness was strained. Insomnia attacked him, and he had recourse to ever-stronger doses of chloral and of that fatal Eastern drug given him by the Dutch gentleman from Java; at the same time, instead of reposing his nervous system and giving it time to calm itself, he worked on and overworked, till at last overwork and drugs and worries proved too much, and that powerful brain, which had created Zarathustra, succumbed to the demands made upon it.

No trace of any morbid influence is to be found in any of Nietzsche's works, with the exception of the later part of his intimate diary, "*Ecce Homo*," written at the end of 1888, after the completion of all his philosophical and literary work. When we come to these passages of the diary, written in December 1888, certain traces of a distinctly morbid character are to be seen. But the contrast is great between these passages and the rest of Nietzsche's work, a contrast clearly showing that his productions, from the "*Birth of Greek Tragedy*" to "*The Will of Power*," are not the fruit of an abnormal state of mind. At the end of his life of thinker, Nietzsche seems transplanted into another world. He was thus transplanted when he wrote "*Zarathustra*,"



but in a different fashion, for "Zarathustra" is a coherent, well-ordered work, showing all the signs of an exceptionally powerful and fertile intellect; whereas certain passages in "Ecce Homo" are incoherent and absurd. Under this morbid influence which heralded by some weeks the fatal stroke, Nietzsche sees himself as a stranger, he contemplates himself as if from afar. He is the continuator of the work of Jesus Christ, as he is also the deadliest enemy of that work, and he is continuing it by annihilating it and transvaluating it. Across nineteen centuries, he stretches his hand out to what he believes to be his predecessor. This idea haunts him continually, and his last letter to Georg Brandes, written on 4th January 1889, and undoubtedly the product of an insane mind, is signed by him "The Crucified One."

The paralytic stroke which attacked him in Turin was a mild one, and confined to cerebral paralysis. Nietzsche was able to go out and to write. It was his letters which first gave alarm to his friends. Professor Overbeck, his former colleague in Bâle, came in haste to Turin, and took Nietzsche back with him to Bâle. After being nursed for a time at Bâle, he was removed to Jena and thence to Naumburg, where his mother and sister joined him, the latter returning from Paraguay to nurse the now helpless brother. Nietzsche was still able to go out, and he met his sister at the station with a bouquet of flowers to greet her on her return.

The decline of the creator of "Zarathustra," of the great apostle and lover of life and of beauty, of the enthusiastic prophet of the Over-Man, symbol of life and of beauty and of strength, was a decline singularly sublime in its pathos and melancholy. The

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silence which had accompanied Nietzsche during his active life, a silence broken towards the end by a few members of the *élite* of the world of thought—by Brandes in Denmark, by Taine in France, by Burckhardt in Switzerland—now suddenly gave way to a celebrity which resounded throughout Europe, from Paris to Moscow, a celebrity which was also an apotheosis. But of this tardy recognition of his genius, Nietzsche knew nothing. In that quiet, sunny house at Weimar, whither his mother and sister had removed from Naumburg, lay the great thinker and philosopher, enjoying on his verandah the balmy air and the view of the hills of the Thuringian Forest which dotted the horizon. His great pleasure was to receive the visits of old and well-loved friends, to hear them talk, and to listen to music. His faithful disciple, Herr Peter Gast, came over to Weimar to cheer him with music, and the deep blue eyes of the invalid filled with tears and his whole frame shook with emotion at the sound. What were his thoughts as, on the beautiful spring and summer evenings, he used to watch the sun slowly sink beneath the horizon in a glow of crimson glory? He seemed to have a faint recollection of his former life of thinker. “Did not I, too, write good books?” he asked once of his sister, as she placed a new book in his hands. Towards his sister, who nursed him with a rare devotion, his gratitude was very touching. All those who visited him were moved by this affection, which he constantly showed, as well as by the beauty of that lofty forehead and of those deep blue eyes, which illness seemed only to have made more beautiful. Professor Lichtenberger, in his most excellent introduction to the philosophy of Nietzsche, describes thus the impression left on him :



“ La souffrance et la maladie avaient, sans doute, marqué leur empreinte sur la physionomie de Nietzsche, mais sans la dégrader, sans lui enlever sa noblesse. Son front restait toujours admirable, son regard, qui semblait comme ‘ tourné vers le dedans,’ avait une expression indéfinissable et profondément émouvante. . . . Dans tous les cas, il avait conscience de l’affection dont sa sœur l’entourait ; il ne cessait de la suivre des yeux lorsqu’elle allait et venait dans la chambre, et rien n’était touchant, quand elle s’asseyait près de son fauteuil, comme le geste gauche et lent par lequel il s’efforçait de prendre dans sa main la main de cette sœur, confidante, jadis, de ses années de jeunesse, suprême consolatrice, aujourd’hui, de ses années de déclin.” <sup>1</sup>

In the room below that occupied by the invalid, Frau Förster-Nietzsche, aided by a few devoted friends of the master, were busily sorting, reading, arranging the numerous papers, manuscripts, diaries, correspondence, etc., left by the master, and destined to be published as posthumous works. And above lay the master himself, unconscious of the noise now being made around his name, dying slowly and nobly, unaware of his apotheosis.

The end came peacefully, gently, on the 25th of August 1899. A fresh paralytic stroke fell, a long sleep ensued, the expression on his face changed slightly—a faint agitation, a long breath, and the master fell into the last sleep, that which knows no awakening. The bold fighter, the brave explorer of the paths of knowledge, the intrepid searcher after truth, had entered the haven of peace at last.

<sup>1</sup> H. Lichtenberger : “ Friedrich Nietzsche : Aphorismes et Fragments choisis,” Introduction (Paris, 1902).

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL VIEW OF NIETZSCHE'S IDEAL

THE temperament of Nietzsche was in some respects well suited to the philosophy of Schopenhauer and to the drama of Wagner; for Nietzsche was of a melancholy disposition, at times; he was nervous, he willingly exaggerated and was willingly aggressive. He knew in all its bitterness the pang of regret which every man worth something must experience at some time or other in the course of his life, the pang caused by the separation from men and from ideas which are dearly loved and cherished and revered. Nietzsche was of a melancholy disposition at times; for instance, at the time of the separation from Wagner, or in "Menschliches, Allzumenschliches," or in "Der Wanderer und sein Schatten," or in some of his correspondence with his sister and with intimate friends. And this melancholy is a feature of all refined and sensitive natures, especially as such natures are prone to see the world more or less through a prism—that of their own ideal—and the disappointment is the more cruel in proportion as the idealised world finds itself out of harmony with the world of reality. But it is only at times that Nietzsche is melancholy. The basis of his nature, or its principal part, is composed of cheerfulness, of optimism, and of a somewhat aggressive spirit which made of Nietzsche a hard and bold fighter.

During the first thirty years of his life Nietzsche



worshipped conceptions which he fancied to be in harmony with his own conception of life. That conception must always have been aristocratic, and was certainly always artistic. His long contact with the Greeks gave him a clearer idea of that personal conception, it showed him a great civilisation in which he recognised, or thought to recognise, his own ideal of life as being the prevalent one. His study of Greek art, of Greek philosophy, of Greek drama, not only enabled him to attain to a clearer conception of the Hellenic culture, but it was destined to have most important effects on his intellectual evolution and on his conception of life in general.

Nietzsche saw a civilisation in which life was glorified, in which life was regarded as sacred, as beautiful, as possessing a supreme value over and above all other things ; in which life was regarded as possessing a supreme value because it is the means of creating art and beauty, which art and beauty are the reflections of the boundless power and possibilities of life. The Greeks loved beauty, and the symmetry of forms, and the gracefulness of attitudes ; they loved strength and power ; and they combined beauty and symmetry and strength and power in the deities of Olympia. But the Greeks were also immortal ; but immortal in the sense of loving life so as to wish for life eternal, so as to wish for life in all its plenitude, in all its possibilities, for the *integral* life, which is above and beyond the mere fact of individual life, and needs for its adequate expression the whole of creation. These Dionysian and Apollinian visions of the world were combined in Olympia, which was at once the expression of the power and beauty of life, and also of its continuity throughout the ages, of its essential identity over and above the world of phenomena.

Schopenhauer had preached the negation of all wish to live as the highest wisdom. Nietzsche had admired Schopenhauer ; but he had admired him chiefly as being the pitiless destroyer of that flat and Philistine optimism which prevailed very extensively in German philosophy about the middle of the century, and which was one of the many bad results of the influence of Hegel. Finding himself in the presence of a great and ancient civilisation, whose ideal is the affirmation of the most *intense* life, Nietzsche rejected Schopenhauer. His own ideal was the affirmation of life ; he must have misunderstood Schopenhauer ; but in any case he came to recognise that Schopenhauer's teaching was not in accordance with the Nietzschean ideal. Nietzsche discovered his real self, that which had always been his real self, in contact with the Greeks.

The Apollinian conception of life finds its concrete expression in the work of the sculptor, whose object is to create beauty, and to give us types of beauty which shall raise us above ourselves, which shall give a value to life, which shall create for us a perspective in which we see the possibilities of our own creative faculty, and so incite us to regard life as sanctioned and dignified by the sole creative power of the artist. The Dionysian conception finds its concrete expression in the aspiration of the musician, the most lofty aim of all music being to awake in us a love of life because it is strong, and, being strong, also and necessarily eternal. There is no contradiction between Apollo, the god of beauty, and Dionysus, the god of strength and of *overflowing life*. For the Greeks beauty was synonymous with strength and power. That which was strong and powerful and affirmative was also beautiful. Beauty being the *raison-d'être* of life,



and the creation of beauty its sole justification, it followed that only the existence of a race which was strong and powerful, which knew how to dominate and to organise, could afford a justification of life.

And the Greeks were precisely a strong race, who knew how to dominate and to organise, Let there be no mistake as to the real meaning of the Athenian republic, a republic governed by ten thousand "aristos" who commanded a nation of subjects and slaves. The political, colonising and administrative activity of the Greeks, activity always bent on conquering and subjugating, whether it be rival states or the highest riddles of the universe, shows us the influence of the Dionysian conception on the daily life of the race ; and the art, the immortal art of the age associated with the name of Pericles, art which entered into the daily life of the inhabitants and stimulated that life to ever-increasing activity, is the result of the Apollinian conception.

By dint of their strength, the Greeks were able to raise themselves above pessimism ; and they were able also to raise themselves above mere optimism, and to confound pessimism and optimism in a higher state which witnessed the resolution of the antinomy of the two. The supreme proof of that strength is to be seen in Greek tragedy. In its personages, Greek tragedy realised the Apollinian conception of life, of life as synonymous with beauty. In the choir of satyrs, it realised the Dionysian conception, life conceived as synonymous with strength and power. The tragedy proclaimed at once the beauty of life, and the exuberant power of life, desiring eternity for the realisation of its infinite possibilities.

And the faculty thus revealed by the Greeks, of being able to contemplate with serenity the sufferings

and woes of life, proves the strength, both physical and moral, of the race. For the Greeks did not seek to conceal the sight of life's sufferings, in order to lull themselves into an optimistic conception of life. They did not merely succeed in contemplating life's sufferings with serenity and calm. They went further and they considered the exhibition, the frequent exhibition, of suffering and pain to be a necessary factor in the combat against optimism, as essential to an understanding of the real value of life, as a counterblast to undue optimism. They went further still, and they considered the sight of suffering and pain as adding to the value and to the beauty of life. They contemplated suffering and pain in the light of an æsthetic manifestation of the universal Will of which all life is but the manifestation. After enjoying the sublimity of the Olympian vision of the beauty and strength and eternity of life, the Greeks liked to renew their force by a contemplation of life under its diametrically opposite aspects, they liked to renew their vigour by going once more to the source of life, which is suffering. And this suffering and pain and hideousness, they considered as the justification of the Olympian vision ; and they considered the Olympian vision as justifying the pain and suffering which accompanied its creation, and as being justified by them. For what reason possess suffering and pain ? Their only justification, which is also their supreme justification, is that they incite us to create beauty, that they are necessary and indispensable to the creation of beauty, that without them beauty could not be created, for beauty does but exist by reason of its antithesis, and thus do suffering and pain become the *raison-d'être* of the creation of beauty, which is the *raison-d'être* of life. We flee from the sight of so



many horrors, and we create for ourselves works of art and of plastic beauty in order to escape from these horrors. And the pain and suffering which is the accompaniment of the whole world-process is also the material with which beauty and art are created. Through them our love of life as synonymous with beauty and with strength is intensified. Through them we realise the vision of life in beauty, of life in power, of life exuberant and overflowing with wealth, wealth of beauty and wealth of power, and needing eternity in order to realise that wealth.

And the whole conception of life which is Nietzsche's is realised in this conception, which was that of the Greeks. Nietzsche is an artist, and as an artist he sees life as a manifestation of beauty ; he sees life as synonymous with the will of power, of domination ; and this will of power, realised by the Greeks in their conquering activity in all domains, is itself but the expression of the love of life, of the affirmation of life, of the wish to live and to live *wholly*.

Arrived at this point, Nietzsche realised that this conception of life was likely to be criticised on the score of its being a conception which can only penetrate the few, the select few. And it is certain that the Dionysian conception of life is the antithesis of a democratic one. The creation of beauty is the work of the *élite* and of the *élite* only ; and the strength of mind and body which reveals itself in the ability to contemplate the sufferings of life, as being necessary to the creation of beauty, can but be the privilege of the few ; and that view of life which considers suffering as necessary to the creation of beauty, which considers art as the sole justification of life, and which holds that the greater the suffering,

both in amount and in intensity, the greater the beauty in amount and intensity, is not likely to be appreciated by that vast majority who are called upon to suffer and to die in order that the minority, the *élite*, may be able to enjoy all the more the contemplation of their artistic creations. For suffering, Nietzsche says, after Schopenhauer, is the basis of all life; it is, in fact, the only *reality* in life. The artistic creation, which culminates in the Apollinian and Dionysian visions, is the only means of emancipating us from suffering, and consequently from pessimism. We take refuge from suffering in art and in beauty. But, even as life is thus rendered beautiful as a supreme creation of art, so does the creation of art require suffering as a primordial factor. The only means of escaping ourselves from pessimism and suffering is thus the infliction of suffering on others, for art cannot exist without its antithesis.

Such a conception of life presupposes the existence of an *élite*, of a minority, strong and powerful, which dominates the rest of humanity. And the Greeks had realised the necessities of logic, and they had established the rule of an *élite* over a republic of slaves and subjects. Nietzsche, too, understood whither the necessities of logic led him. The creation of beauty as the justification of life; and the existence of suffering as a primordial condition in that creation; this necessitated the rule of an *élite*. And the existence of this *élite* is further justified by the fact that its members alone are capable of creating beauty, that they alone are strong enough to surmount the trials of life and to take pleasure in the contemplation of those trials.

The existence of a strong, dominating race, in whom and by whom is realised the Dionysian and



Apollinian conceptions of life ; who, by its strength, and consequently by its beauty, is naturally called upon to govern humanity ; the existence of such a race can alone ensure the existence of those conditions without which life would be but a universal wail, without object, without justification. Such a race creates the conditions in which life is rendered tolerable ; it creates the conditions in which life is rendered fruitful and beautiful and strong. It creates beauty, and in so doing it creates those ideals, which are at the same time visions of its own infinite possibilities, which give a value and a meaning to life. But in order that a race may create beauty, may create those conditions under which we first apperceive the value of life, in which we first can desire life, it is indispensable that certain antecedent conditions should already exist. The first of these antecedent conditions is the existence of suffering. Only as we become aware of the intensity of human suffering can we *wish* to create an artistic vision which shall be its antithesis. Only as we become aware of the intensity of suffering is there a *possibility* of realising its antithesis. The justification of a ruling race is the justification of humanity, for it is the duty of that race to create the values which give a value to life, which give a meaning to life. And that race, by its strength, is itself, and in itself, an æsthetic manifestation of the highest order. For, if it can create beauty, it is because it is strong, because it has an excess of vitality which permits it to surmount pessimism and suffering. And its vitality can be maintained only on condition that it is rendered hard, and it is rendered hard by the sight of suffering. Suffering is thus necessary, it is indispensable, both as the inspirator of artistic creation, and as main-

taining the vitality essential to that artistic creation, which is the result of a superabundance of life.

Such is Nietzsche's conception of art. And Nietzsche's conception of art contains all Nietzsche. He differs profoundly on this subject from his erst-while master, Schopenhauer. For Schopenhauer, art is the means of escaping for a while, for a short time, from the tyranny of the desire of life. For a brief moment we stand, entranced and as if in ecstasy before the product of artistic creation, and during that moment we are uplifted above ourselves, we are uplifted to a higher sphere, in which we cease to desire. We do not, indeed, in this condition, consciously form a positive wish to be delivered from the desire of life, which positive wish is the highest wisdom; but we negatively cease to desire life for a brief moment, for a while the ardent flame of desire is quenched, and in this quenching of the thirst for life lies, according to Schopenhauer, the value of art. But even as Schopenhauer considered art as possessing a value only so far as it acts in a nihilistic sense, in so far as it extinguishes in us the desire to live, so does Nietzsche consider the value of art as residing in it as a great *stimulant* of life. Art is what alone gives a value to life, what alone gives it a meaning, without which life would not be possible, or would be possible only as an endless purgatory. "Art is the great stimulant of life; how can one say of art that it has no object, no purpose, how can one understand it as 'l'art pour l'art' ? One question remains; art brings with it much that is ugly, hard and questionable—does not art, therefore, *suffer* from life to this extent? . . . But this is the pessimistic view: one must appeal from it to the artists themselves. What does the



tragic artist communicate to us about himself? Does he not reveal to us precisely that condition in which one stands without fear before the most terrible and mysterious? This condition is in itself of great value; he who knows it, honours it above all others. The artist reveals it to us, he must reveal it, provided he be an artist, and a genius for revealing himself. Courage and the sentiment of liberty in the face of a mighty enemy, of a dread-inspiring power, of a problem which causes us to tremble—this *victorious* condition is the one chosen by the artist, glorified by him. In the face of tragedy, does all that which is bellicose in our nature celebrate its saturnalia. He who is used to suffering, he who seeks suffering, the *heroic* man, celebrates his own existence in the Tragedy—for the sake of this alone does the tragic artist drink the cup of sweetest cruelty.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus art is the value of life; and that life alone is worth living which is a manifestation of art; and that life is a manifestation of art which is strong, which is powerful, which is rich in vitality, which is exuberant. But art brings much in its train which is not artistic, much suffering, much pain, much cruelty, many bitter tears. This is erroneous. Suffering, pain, cruelty, tears *are* artistic; and the strength of the artist consists precisely in being able to contemplate suffering and cruelty from the standpoint of art,

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” viii. 135, 136. “Die Tapferkeit und Freiheit des Gefühls vor einem mächtigen Feinde, vor einem erhabenen Ungemach, vor einem Problem, das Grauen erweckt—dieser *siegreiche* Zustand ist es, den der tragische Künstler auswählt, den er verherrlicht. Vor der Tragödie feiert das Kriegerische in unsrer Seele seine Saturnalien; wer Leid gewohnt ist, wer Leid aufsucht, der *heroische* Mensch, preist mit der Tragödie sein Dasein—ihm allein kredenzt der Tragiker den Trunk dieser süssesten Grausamkeit.”

in being able to contemplate them as beautiful, as artistic in themselves, as essential pieces in the great edifice of beauty. Without them, art would not be. And the greater the suffering the greater the development of artistic creation. And as the intensity of artistic creation is the condition of life, as life finds its justification in art, as the object of life is to expand and develop in beauty, in ever greater beauty, so does life require suffering, and much suffering, and much intense suffering.

And Nietzsche preaches to us the necessity of becoming hardened, of inflicting suffering, of being able to witness the most terrible suffering, with serenity, nay with joy, of being able to inflict and witness suffering in order to be able to taste the more keenly the joys of that artistic creation and of that artistic destruction, which is itself a fresh incitement to creation, which embellish life. He tells us that the great man, the truly great man, is not he who is full of sympathy for his fellows, but he who is capable of inflicting the cruellest suffering without heeding the cries of his victim. The greatness of a man is to be measured by his capacity to inflict suffering. It is necessary to harden ourselves, to harden ourselves greatly.

“Why so hard? asked once upon a time the piece of kitchen coal of the diamond; are we not near relations?—Why so soft? O my brethren, that is what I ask you: are you not—my brethren?

“Why so soft, so tender, so conciliatory? Why is such self-denial in your hearts? Such little consciousness of your Destiny in your look?

“And if you do not desire to be the messengers of Destiny, and of an inexorable Destiny; how can you hope to *triumph* with me?



“ And if your hardness cannot shine forth and cut and crush : how can you hope to *create* with me ?—All creators are hard. And it must be a great joy to you to mould the face of centuries as if it were wax,—

“ Joy, to write your name on the will of centuries as if on brass—harder than brass, nobler than brass. That alone which is the hardest is also the noblest.

“ This new Table, O my brethren, I write above you : BECOME HARD ! ” <sup>1</sup>

Thus life in beauty, in strength, and in power ; and suffering and pain as necessary to the creation of beauty, consequently to the glorification of life : this is the message of Nietzsche. It is a message which is distinctly pagan, and distinctly Hellenic, and distinctly Roman ; it is the message of the Renaissance ; and it is a message which is distinctly anti-Christian, anti-democratic, and sufficiently Neronian to enable

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vi. 312. The original German, one of Nietzsche's most striking passages, is as follows :—

“ Warum so hart !—sprach zum Diamanten einst die Küchen-Kohle ; sind wir denn nicht Nah-Verwandte ?—

“ Warum so weich ? Oh meine Brüder, also frage ich euch : seid ihr denn nicht-meine Brüder ?

“ Warum so weich, so weichend und nachgebend ? Warum ist so viel Leugnung, Verleugnung in eurem Herzen ? So wenig Schicksal in eurem Blicke ?

“ Und wollt ihr nicht Schicksale sein und Unerbittliche : wie könntet ihr einst mit mir—siegen ?

“ Und wenn eure Härte nicht blitzen und schneiden und zerschneiden will : wie könntet ihr einst mit mir—schaffen ?

“ Alle Schaffenden nämlich sind hart. Und Seligkeit muss es euch dünken, eure Hand auf Jahrtausende zu drücken wie auf Wachs,—

“—Seligkeit, auf dem Willen von Jahrtausenden zu schreiben wie auf Erz—härter als Erz, edler als Erz. Ganz hart ist allein das Edelste.

“ Diese neue Tafel, oh meine Brüder, stelle ich über euch : WERDET HART ! ”

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us to conclude that Nietzsche must have been an admirer of Nero.

All that which is tired and weak and nervous and pessimistic and anæmic in life finds in Nietzsche its deadliest enemy. And that which is exuberant and gay and bold and intrepid and full of strength and of the love of life finds in Nietzsche its fervent apostle.

According to Schopenhauer, the greatest crime in life is the fact of living. According to Nietzsche the greatest crime in life is sympathy. Sympathy does not serve any purpose except that of increasing the amount of suffering on earth without adding to its beauty. Sympathy does not help him to whom it is proffered ; but it drags down him who proffers it to the level of the others. Sympathy adds to the number of those who are miserable. It may prove, and has indeed proved, exceedingly dangerous as an instrument for impressing on the privileged classes the notion of the injustice of their privileges, and thereby sounding their death-knell. Zarathustra is attacked by the vision of the Most Hideous Man, he who is the symbol of all the miseries and all the sufferings and all the ugliness of humanity, he who has slain God himself, victim of the constant contemplation of all the wounds and sores of stricken humanity. And Zarathustra has a moment's hesitation. The awfulness of the vision has taken him aback. But Zarathustra vanquishes himself, he thrusts the symbol of suffering humanity aside, and goes further. It is the great victory, the victory over his innermost self, the crushing out of the feelings of sympathy and tenderness.

But it would be, perhaps, a mistake to suppose that Nietzsche preached the doctrine of hardness and cruelty for its own sake. Sympathy adds to the



number of those who are miserable. Those who are happy, and who love life, and who cherish life, are liable to be rendered unhappy, are sure to be rendered unhappy, are sure to turn against life, to declare life a misery and a burden, by sympathising with those who are miserable and who hate life because they are miserable. For what is sympathy? It is the sharing of another's burden; only this sharing of the burden does not relieve any of the weight on the shoulders of him who is miserable, while it places a burden which was hitherto absent on the shoulders of him who was up till then happy. So that sympathy adds to the stock of ugliness and suffering in the world. And Schopenhauer was incontestably right when he saw in sympathy the best means of attaining to that negation of the desire to live, which he prized as the highest wisdom. Sympathy reveals to us the depths of the world's suffering, it inspires us with timidity in the face of that suffering, with the consciousness of the non-value of all life; it incites us to desire the cessation of all life and the cessation of all desire. Sympathy is thus an anti-vital sentiment. And it was but natural that Nietzsche, the great apostle of life in all its plenitude, should regard sympathy as a crime.

The predication of the gospel of life in all its plenitude entails some consequences which Nietzsche foresaw. Firstly, the life which will assert itself in all its plenitude must encounter no obstacles which will hinder it in effecting this realisation; and if it encounters obstacles it must be able to overthrow them. That is a condition precedent. Secondly, when that condition has been realised, life will affirm itself by all and every means; by war. "My brothers in war, I love you from my

heart, I am, and always have been, your fellow-warrior. And I am also your best enemy. . . . You should love peace as a means to fresh wars, and the short peace rather than the long one. . . . You say, a good cause sanctifies even war ; but I say, a good war sanctifies every cause ! ”<sup>1</sup> By war, and by the infliction of suffering, and by the trampling down of the weaker ; and by the creation of beauty, and by the assertion of one’s personality in every domain of life, whether artistic, or intellectual, or administrative, or political, or social.

And this affirmation of oneself, this expansion of oneself, is but the affirmation of one’s belief in life, of one’s love of life, which is the cardinal point of Nietzsche’s doctrine. During nineteen centuries and longer, since Socrates and Plato, the affirmative and expansive and exuberant life has been repressed, every obstacle has been set in its way, every effort has been made to prevent life from affirming and expanding itself in all its boundless plenitude. “ There are many preachers of death, and the earth is full of those whose extinction should be preached.” There are those who preach that life is not worth living, that the world is a vale of tears ; and these are those, and they are at present the great majority, whose extinction should be preached and advocated. For these preachers of death are the enemies of all life. For death, as they understand it, is the antithesis of life, the release not only from life but from all desire to live, the nirvana in which those who are tired of life and weary of life may take refuge and find repose.

But death, for him who loves life, who aspires to have life beautiful, to have it powerful and exuberant and strong, who loves life above all things, who loves

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vi. 66, 67.



life as a creation of art and on account of the possibilities it affords of creating art and beauty, who wishes for life eternally, because only in eternity can the plenitude of its expansion be realised, for him death is also something which partakes of the beautiful and gay and optimistic. For if death be indeed a token of the decay to which all individual life is exposed, it is also a reminder of the eternity of life over and above the accidents of this world of phenomena. If death be a manifestation of decay, it is also a manifestation of resurrection. The individual will, with the force which it incarnates, is dead, but the Universal Will, of which life and the world are but emanations, exists still, exists eternally, symbol of the desire of life, immortal and unquenchable.

“The creator dies his death, triumphant, surrounded by those who hope and praise. . . .”

“To die is the best ; but the next best is to die in battle, in the full expansion of a great soul.

“But that which the fighter, as also the victor, hates, is that miserable death of yours, which steals on you like a thief, but which nevertheless comes as lord and master.

“I recommend you my own death, the death which is free, which comes only when I will. . . .”

“Let your death be not a reproach to man and to the world, my friends ; this I ask of the honey of your soul.

“In your death should your soul and your virtue shine forth, like unto the evening glow of the sinking sun, otherwise have you failed in your death.

“And thus shall I die myself, so that you, my friends, shall on my account love life more greatly. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” vi. 105, 106, 108.

Thus is death also a fresh means of loving life, of affirming life. And thus also, from the heights in which he soars, does Nietzsche embrace, in the lyric gospel of the love of life which he preaches, also that phenomenon which is generally considered as the antithesis of life. Death shall sanctify life ; death shall not be welcomed as a release from life ; death shall, by its courage, by its intrepidity, by its beauty, give a fresh proof of the beauty of all life, and thereby increase our love of life.

It is impossible to go further in one's affirmation of life, and of the supreme value of life. In this brief general view of Nietzsche's position, a sketch necessary in order to give us an idea of Nietzsche's philosophy, we have shown that the cardinal doctrine of Nietzsche is the love of life, the affirmation of life in all its plenitude and power, of life unrestrained by any obstacles, expanding itself in force and in beauty. And this affirmation of life contains all Nietzsche, as we shall see. But we must now examine Nietzsche's position with regard to the various obstacles at present existing, and which prevent an unrestrained expansion of life.



## CHAPTER III

### THE STATE

WE have seen that the central point, the cornerstone, of Nietzsche's philosophy, is a lyrical and enthusiastic affirmation of life, of life beautiful, strong, exuberant, overflowing, of life manifesting itself in a thousand ways, in art, in social, intellectual, political, administrative activity, of life in all its plenitude and power. But many are the obstacles to the realisation of this ideal; and Nietzsche was too intelligent not to see clearly these many obstacles, and too loyal and sincere to pass them over in silence. Nietzsche recognised the obstacles which prevent the realisation of his ideal of the Over-Man, with his superabundant vitality flowing over and expending itself freely and without hindrance. He recognised that all the institutions of the present day, and some of them are ancient and venerable, and most of them are considered to be axiomatic truths—all these institutions he recognised as so many obstacles preventing the fulfilment of his ideal.

But these institutions are no mere fortuitous growths, having sprung up arbitrarily, or having been imposed forcibly by some extraneous or extra-natural power. They have their root deep down in the habits, traditions, prejudices, of the race, and are but the concrete manifestation of the psychology of the race, which, in turn, is but a collective expression for the psychology of the individuals who com-

pose it. And many of the obstacles to the realisation of the ideal of the Over-Man are inherent in the habits, traditions and prejudices of humanity.

For instance, that feeling of fear before the unknown, that feeling of "misoneism" as psychologists term it; what greater obstacle than this to the free and unfettered exploration of the paths of knowledge? But such free and unfettered exploration of the paths of knowledge is a necessity to him who would know the keenest joys, and also the keenest sufferings, of life; consequently to him who desires to live *fully*. But there is no doubt about this general repugnance to a free and unfettered exploration. The most unprejudiced minds still have their prejudices. The scientist who, breaking loose from the religious beliefs which have, perhaps, been his in childhood, imagines himself to be a free and unfettered explorer after truths, to be a "free thinker"; is he in reality so free? Is he not still retaining many of the prejudices of his childhood, his unwavering belief in the truth, for instance, or his respect for the moral law as assumed in the Kantian imperative? Unknown, perhaps, even to himself, there lingers a pertinacious dislike of adventure in the research of knowledge, and an equally pertinacious partiality for well-trodden paths, which present no dangers, where the road is straight and the point of arrival sure. Humanity does not like to explore the virgin forests, which threaten the bold wanderer with a thousand perils, unknown and unforeseen, in which there are many chances against one that he will miss his path and be lost in a hopeless maze. This sentiment of fear before the unknown is a not unnatural one, but it is an obstacle, and a serious obstacle, to that free and unfettered search after



knowledge which is at once necessary to the emancipation of man from the bonds which now enthrall him, and which is also necessary to the realisation of life in its integrity.

Thus here at the very outset is already an obstacle, and a very great obstacle, to be removed. Man must shake off that fear of the unknown and unexplored, he must gird up his loins and boldly explore the mysterious labyrinth of knowledge ; he must learn to shake off the prejudices accumulated by centuries ; prejudices which, by the force of heredity, have become part of his nature. He must unlearn a great deal, indeed most, of what he has learned, and which is merely error. But these errors and prejudices which he must unlearn compose his most sacred, his most cherished, his most firmly rooted beliefs. He is called upon to throw off the burdens of morality, of religion, of the State, and all other obstacles to the realisation of his integral self. And how many care to face the risk ? How many care to wander through the labyrinths of the virgin forest, or navigate amid the reefs of unknown seas, in order to attain to the bottom of things ; if indeed things have a bottom, or if that bottom only contains something disagreeable, something repugnant, or nothing at all ?

However the risk must be faced boldly. Man must shake off his fear of the unknown, he must carefully avoid the beaten track and plunge into the unknown recesses of the forest. He knows not what he may meet on the way, or where he will arrive, or if he will indeed arrive at all. But he will taste the pleasures, the incomparable pleasures, as also the poignant anguish and suffering, which alone are the lot of the explorer, of the Don Juan

of knowledge. Many and bitter will be his disappointments and mortifications and deceptions, but his will be also the vast joy of the man who suddenly *finds himself*, who, like Rip Van Winkle, awakes after a long sleep; of the man who has consciousness of the expansion of himself and of the realisation of himself during the search and by the search. The sentiment of infinite liberty in the face of the unknown, in the face of the most redoubtable problems, in the face of unknown dangers and ambushes, is the sentiment of highest joy and triumph; it is the sanction of life, because through it life is affirmed and glorified.

The concrete obstacles to the realisation of his ideal, whether represented by the State, or by the religions, or by the categorical imperative, or otherwise, Nietzsche did not attack them separately, in an orderly and methodical manner. He attacked them all one after the other, or all together, without method, violently.

First of all, we have the State. Nietzsche hates the State, in which he sees an organisation discovered by the masses for their protection and defence against the strong, the exceptional, the master. The State is synonymous with mediocrity organised. Being the invention of the weak and the inferior, it profits only the weak and the inferior. It allows these latter to develop without let or hindrance, without fear of the conqueror or the beast of prey. Its aim is the suppression of the exceptionally strong, of the exceptionally gifted. The logical expression of the State is the Democracy, with its absurd doctrine of equality.

When we come to examine the State, the modern



State, what do we find? What is the precise aim of the modern State? The modern State aims at enabling the greatest number of men possible to live together peaceably in the best and happiest conditions possible. The aim of the State is not the development of the individual, nor the creation of beauty, nor the cultivation of a superior race, nor even the protection of the better and stronger elements in a race; the aim of the State is the greatest possible multiplication of individuals; its aim is a régime of flat and mediocre happiness for the greatest number of these individuals; its aim must necessarily be the suppression of all that which is exceptional and superior to the mass, for that which is superior to the mass revolts against the authority of the latter as represented by the State. The Biblical exhortation: "Go forth and multiply," summarises the aim of the State. The *mot d'ordre* of modern democracy: "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," completes this definition.

The State is the creation of the weak, and is consequently in the service of the weak. "The State? What is that? I will open my ears, and I will recount you the story of the death of nations. The State is the coldest of all cold monsters. It lies coldly; and this is the lie which proceeds from its mouth: 'I, the State, am also the People.' But it is a lie. They were creators, those that created the different peoples, and gave them a faith and an ideal; and thus did they serve life. They are destroyers and nihilists, those that set traps for great numbers and call those traps the State; they hang a sword and a hundred passions above them. There where a strong race still exists, the State is not

understood, and is hated as the evil eye and as a crime against morals and liberty. . . . The State lies with all the tongues of good and of evil ; and whatever proceeds from it is a lie, and all that it possesses is stolen. Everything connected with the State is false ; it bites with stolen teeth, and its very bowels are false.”<sup>1</sup>

Being an instrument designed to permit of the greatest possible multiplication of individuals, the State necessarily tends to favour the increase of numbers of wholly superfluous persons :

“ The State is there where are all the drinkers of poison, good and bad. It is there where all, good and bad, loose themselves. It is there where the slow suicide of all is termed ‘ life.’

“ Behold these superfluities ! They steal the work of the discoverers, and the treasures of the wise. They call their theft education—and everything in their hands becomes illness and impotency !

“ Behold these superfluities ! They are for ever ailing, they give vent to their spleen and call the result their newspapers. They devour each other, but cannot even digest each other.

“ Behold these superfluities ! They make wealth and yet become poorer. They desire power, and first of all that condition precedent to all power—money. . . .

“ There, where the State ceases to be, there begins the man who is not superfluous. There, where the State ceases to exist—behold, my brethren ! Do you not see the rainbow and the bridge of the Over-Man ? ”<sup>2</sup>

It matters not whether the State be autocratic,

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vi. 69, 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 71, 72.



as in Persia, or democratic, as in Great Britain and the United States. The State is always the enemy of everything which is exceptional, of everything which is powerful, of everything which rises above the ordinary, of everything which is independent. What it aims at is the multiplication and protection of the inferior elements of the race, which elements constitute its strength and guarantee its longevity. The State loves correct attitudes, normality, mediocrity.

And the proof of this is that all those who, in modern times, have risen above humanity, and dominated humanity, and ruled humanity with a rule of iron, have either broken loose from all State control, or else have used the machinery of the State in order to assert their powers. The State is an admirable instrument in the hands of a Cesare Borgia, or of a Peter the Great, or of a Napoleon. It is an admirable instrument for dominating the mass of humanity—and as such the great rulers of humanity, from Alexander and Julius Cæsar down to Frederic and Napoleon, have always understood it—that is to say, all those who belong to the mass, either by reason of their weakness in “physique,” or on account of their incompetency, or because of their inability or hesitation to enter upon new paths and forsake the beaten track, or for any other reason. All these need the State for their protection; for the State protects them against exterior foes, and protects them against themselves. The State acts as do the religions, as a policeman who prevents the bad instincts of the masses from breaking loose.

The position of Nietzsche with regard to the State is fundamentally opposed to the position of the anarchists, who also desire the abolition of the

State. The anarchists desire the abolition of the State in order to do away with the power of the governing classes, of the bourgeois and capitalist classes, in order to ensure to each worker the integral value of his own production, in order to do away with the alleged exploitation of the industrious and working classes by the capitalist and employers' class. The condemnation of the State by Bakunin, by Kropotkine, Reclus, Grave, and their disciples, is a condemnation pronounced in the name of the masses, pronounced against the alleged exploiters of the masses, against those who have the reins of power in their hands. According to the anarchist theory, the State is the instrument of class domination, which theory is also that of Marx and the different collectivist schools. The State, according to this theory, is the means whereby the capitalist class is able to prolong its domination. The State, still according to this theory, is the great obstacle which prevents the realisation of the anarchist and collectivist ideal—the ideal of universal fraternity and solidarity.

Anyone even cursorily acquainted with Nietzsche will at once recognise the total and fundamental divergence of views which separates him from the anarchist school. The latter has as starting point the ideal of a humanity living in peace, fraternity and solidarity, of a humanity whose unit, the individual, is naturally good, naturally pacific, and whose natural goodness and disinterestedness have been momentarily destroyed by various influences, of which the State is among the most important. Nietzsche has as starting point the ideal of a humanity living in strife and in war, of an Over-Man dominating humanity by his strength, of an



Over-Man, type of the brute, strong, ferocious, merciless ; he sees in man, not a creature naturally good, but a creature naturally and essential vicious ; he sees in the State, not the destroyer of man's good qualities, but the destroyer of his passions and of his vices, of that which is fundamental and which is attractive in his nature. The anarchist school hates the State as a symbol of power ; Nietzsche hates it as a symbol of impotence. The anarchist school heralds its downfall as the end of tyranny ; Nietzsche sees in its downfall the means of establishing a far greater tyranny, that of the Over-Man. The anarchist school works against the State as an instrument of class-domination and in the interests of the masses ; Nietzsche thunders against the State as an instrument for the protection and creation of mediocrity, and in the interests, not of the masses, whom he despises, but of the Over-Man.

It is therefore a very flagrant error to confound Nietzsche with the anarchist school of theorists. Both desire the downfall of the State, but both approach the question from totally different standpoints. The anarchist conception of society is the exactly diametrical opposite to that of Nietzsche. The anarchist school desires the complete downfall of the state, in order to inaugurate the era of anarchy. But what is more precisely Nietzsche's position ?

In the first place, Nietzsche does not desire so complete a downfall of the State, perhaps, as we might imagine. Nietzsche is essentially and primordially an autocrat, and so far as the State represents Authority—that is to say, so far as the State represents the Will of Power, the will to dominate—Nietzsche is perhaps willing to accept it. But, you reply, this is precisely what the State does represent. The

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State is the symbol of authority versus anarchy, and the anarchists are logical in wishing to bring about its downfall, but Nietzsche is less logical in wishing the same thing.

But this argument shows a misunderstanding of Nietzsche's conception of authority, and also a misunderstanding of what is meant by the authority of the State. And indeed Nietzsche's conception of the State is intimately bound up with his whole philosophical teaching. Nietzsche, we must remember, is an autocrat, and an enemy of the democratic ideal. But Nietzsche is more than a mere autocrat. He is an autocrat who aims at the establishment of an autocracy which shall govern by reason of its strength, by reason of its power, by reason of the terror and awe and respect, and also veneration, which it inspires. The autocracy which Nietzsche sees as the ideal of the future shall be one in which rigid exclusiveness prevails ; in which admittance to its ranks shall be dependent on the strength, the prowess, the courage, the intelligence, the anthropological superiority, of each member ; in which each shall be free to develop himself to the utmost degree, in boundless freedom, or almost boundless, at anyrate in a freedom to which the only limits are those set by his own strength and capacity. The Nietzschean autocracy shall be one to which only the fittest shall be admitted, a narrow circle composed of the elect alone, of those who are the creators of the values which humanity worships, and each member shall conquer admittance only by his deeds ; but the deeds which shall gain for him admittance shall be deeds of daring and prowess, both intellectual and physical, which no State could permit, for it is such deeds as these which destroy the State and falsify its aim and *raison-d'être*. " In our



present civilised world we know only the degenerate criminal, crushed by the hostility and contempt of society, the criminal who distrusts himself, who often seeks to belittle and excuse his act—in short, a type of criminal who has failed ; and we forget that *every great man was a criminal*, only not in miserable style, but in great style—we forget that *every great act is a crime.*"<sup>1</sup> The great man of the future, he who is alone worthy to be a master and a ruler of men, who is alone worthy to enter the ranks of the autocracy of the Over-Men, he must necessarily be a criminal—that is to say, a man who knows not good and bad, because he is above them ; a man who is the scourge of humanity ; who, in order to realise the expansion of his personality, needs humanity as a field for experiments, as a field in which he can sow suffering broadcast, for every great man needs to inflict suffering, for every great man is warlike and hard-hearted and needs great hecatombs in order to attain his object. The aim of the Over-Man is a great aim, and it is the realisation of life in its entirety, in all its infinite possibilities ; and, in the great game which the Over-Man plays with Destiny, humanity is but a pawn.

Such is the authority which Nietzsche would set up, an authority of blood and iron, dominating humanity by its strength, by the awe and veneration which that strength inspires, an authority which has attained its position through countless hecatombs, through tears and suffering, which has posed the greatest and deepest problems which confront the human mind and resolved them, which has lived through perils innumerable and which has through its perils become hardened, become fitted to occupy the position which it occupies, that of creator of the tables

<sup>1</sup> " Werke," xv. 355.

of values which shall constitute the faith of the world. The autocrat of the future, the Over-Man, is the embodiment of strength and beauty, who is beautiful in his strength, and who is strong enough to give full vent to all his passions, and also strong enough to restrain those passions, and to prevent them from flowing over and destroying life.

It ensues that the autocracy of Nietzsche will exist not by any means for the benefit of humanity at large, for it will be a scourge to humanity, for it will be the master with the iron glove, and humanity will be the slave and the drudge. Thus alike by its final aim, by its composition, and by its immediate aims, this autocracy will be the exact opposite of all contemporary states, whether autocratic or constitutional. Its final aim will be itself and its own development in strength and in beauty ; its composition will be that of the most elect : of the fittest of the fit, of the bravest of the brave, of the strongest of the strong ; and its immediate aim will be the exploitation and scourging of humanity as the chief means to its own consolidation.

If we turn now to the State of to-day, whether it be autocratic or constitutional, we find at once that every act which qualifies for admittance into the autocracy of to-morrow is condemned. The State of to-day is essentially moral ; while the Over-Man is nothing if not profoundly immoral. The object of the State is not the creation of beauty, nor the development of individual power and independence. Its object is the development of mediocrity ; its object is the creation of a flat, colourless ideal of uniformity, which is certainly not beautiful, and which is certainly not the symbol of strength. The aim of the State is the " good " man, the " correct "



man ; its ideal is the staid man of business, or the placid and conservative “ bourgeois ” who lives on his income and leads an honourable, a sedate, and a quiet life. The State has its philosophy, which inculcates respect of the law, of the moral law, and enjoins the worship of the trinity of the Good, the Beautiful and the True. The State is the enemy of all initiative or independence. Whether it be Russia or France, an absolute monarchy or a republic, initiative and independence are considered by the State as its most redoubtable foes. How could the modern State accommodate a Julius Cæsar or a Cesare Borgia or a Napoleon ? These creators of their own values, these dominators and tyrants of humanity, were themselves the State, they were themselves the incarnation of the Will of Power, they personified Power under its most redoubtable aspect.

The State, however, is not redoubtable. The State is not the creation of courage or of prowess or of greatness of any sort. The State has been created in order to render the life of the greater number tolerable—that is to say, its object is the curbing and eventual suppression of the passions which surge up in the human soul and which threaten the peace and good digestion of one’s neighbour. The State needs order and peace, and also the “ peace of mind.”

But the State represents a principle of authority, you object ; and in order to obtain authority you must have power. There is no such thing as authority without power of some sort.

Certainly. The State possesses authority ; but there are two sorts of authority. There is the authority which is obtained by the superabundance of force and energy, such as was realised, for instance, in Napoleon. And there is the authority which is

obtained by all sorts of intrigues, of backstairs plotting, of cunning tricks, of baseness and meanness and slyness ; and such is the authority of the State.

The State proclaims itself moral, but it is in reality profoundly immoral and disgustingly immoral. This is a first proof of its weakness, of the mean and degenerate physique of those who control it ; for the great sign of strength is to be able to proclaim oneself immoral, at least to oneself. Napoleon gave himself out as actuated by moral motives ; but that was because humanity is too unintelligent to understand the immoralist ; and to himself Napoleon also confessed himself. But the rulers of the modern State are full of self-deception ; they lie to themselves, they deceive themselves deliberately, until they begin actually to believe in themselves and in their virtue ; they blind themselves with big words and pious attitudes, and the reason for their deliberate self-deception is that they are afraid to examine themselves to the bottom, afraid to look the truth in the face. Here is a first proof of cowardice, of weakness, and of hypocrisy.

Under cover of this “*tartufferie*,” the most tortuous intrigues and plottings are carried on. Those who, to-day, rule the State, or aspire to rule it, not being strong enough, or courageous enough, or bold enough, to assert their supremacy by strong, courageous and bold means, have resort to all sorts of crooked and unclean methods. The democratic State, with its shameless place-hunting and deception of the electors, with its corruption and jobbery, is typical of that sort of power which is represented by the State. That power is acquired by means of corruption and jobbery—is not the French republic a striking instance ?—and he who employs the most



underhand methods, he who possesses the most crooked brain, he who is most practised in the art of unscrupulous intrigue, of backstairs plotting, and of self-deception, he arrives at a goal and takes charge of the helm of the State. The contests of political parties, are they contests of principles or of personal ambitions, mean and sordid? Incontestably of the latter. The régime of democracy, with all its scandals, has discouraged those who possess any real value, those who are brave and who look upon the interests of the race, and of the race of the future, as the highest aim of activity.

The democratic State hates the great man, and the absolutist State hates the great man, because the great man is the redoubtable enemy who would do away, and mercilessly, with all the place-hunters and blood-suckers who, by means of tortuous intrigue, hold at present the reins of power. The advent of the great man means the death of the place-hunter. And therefore the State proscribes the great man, and outlaws him.

And how do they keep hold of their places, these jobbers and intriguers? By means of specious promises—not to improve the condition of the race by cultivating systematically its anthropologically superior elements, oh no! But by promises to the mass, by luring on the mass, by holding out visions of future happiness, by exciting the covetousness and envy and hatred and malice of the mass. And thus does the State become the greatest foe of progress, thus does it seek to multiply the inferior elements at the cost of the superior, for it is only in the inferior elements that the State finds its support.

The results of the activity of the State have long been manifest in Europe; and biologists have re-

peatedly called attention to the growing degeneracy of the race as the result of the policy consistently pursued by those to whom is confided the responsibility of governing. It is notorious that Darwin was extremely pessimistic as to the future of the race, and his views are also those of Galton, Vacher de Lapouge, Sergi, Ploetz, and of all eugenists in Europe or America. "If we grant that this struggle for existence really does exist—and as a matter of fact it sometimes does occur—its results unfortunately are the exact opposite of those which the Darwinist school desires, and which one ought to desire with it. The struggle results generally in the discomfiture of the strong, of the favoured exceptions. The race does not increase in strength ; its weaklings are always triumphant over its strong men, because the former are more numerous and more clever. Darwin forgot to reckon with the intellect (" Geist "). . . . The weaklings possess greater intelligence. . . . I understand by intelligence, as it is easy to see, slyness, cautiousness, patience, deceit, great self-possession, and everything which we call mimicry ; to this latter a large part of our so-called virtue belongs." <sup>1</sup>

To sum up : the State is a creation of the weaker elements of the race who, by dint of their greater cautiousness, slyness, deceit, trickery and self-possession, have succeeded in outmanœuvring the stronger and fiercer elements. The State is the instrument of protection of these weak and treacherous elements. The power in the State is represented by those among the inferior race who have succeeded in outwitting and outdeceiving their competitors. The rule of the State is the rule of jobbers and place-hunters, who need peace and order and quiet in order

<sup>1</sup> " Werke," viii. 128.



that they may pursue their labours undisturbed ; and who, in order to keep the power in their hands, are forced to resort to all manner of bribery, including the holding out of visions of the future which appeal to the worse passions of the masses, which tempt their cupidity and excite their malice and envy. The result of this dependence of the political place-holders on the masses is the enactment of legislative measures in the highest degree prejudicial to the well-being of the race as a whole, prejudicial to individual liberty and initiative, and prejudicial to social progress and organisation.

The State, therefore, is one of the chief obstacles to the realisation of that ideal of force, of beauty, and of integral life which Nietzsche preached. Within the precincts of the State, only the superfluous can find place. There where the State ends, there begins the great man, the Over-Man, who can, indeed, seize the helm of the State and say with Louis the Fourteenth: "L'état c'est moi" ; but in so doing he places himself outside the State, above the State, and uses the State in order to assert his own power and domination. Then, and then only, does the State become a symbol of the Will of Power.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MORAL LAW

THE State is one of the great obstacles to the realisation of Nietzsche's ideal. But the State itself is not an accidental growth. It is the expression of the Will of Power, but of the Will of Power of an inferior race, which seeks to assert itself by underhand and tortuous means. But the State is, as it were, but a secondary expression of the Will of Power; its justification, in the eyes of those who defend it on sociological grounds, is not that it is the means of exploiting the working classes at the expense of the mercantile "bourgeoisie,"<sup>1</sup> its justification, its ultimate justification, is a purely moral one. The institution of the State is the best means, if not the sole means, of preserving law and order, and—morality.

All our social institutions are, in final resort, reducible to moral institutions. The State—the Law—the Constitution—the People's Charter—are all expressions of a desire to live in harmony with the moral law. Some anthropologists—for instance, Quatrefages—have gone so far as to assert that man is a religious animal; which means that man is a moral animal, moral by nature, by instinct, by birth. Immorality is thus a crime against nature.

And it is a fact that every philosophical, social

<sup>1</sup> F. Brunetière: "Sur les Chemins de la Croyance. Première Étape. L'Utilisation du Positivisme," p. 11 (Paris, 1905).



and other system which has been invented, from Socrates to Renouvier, has been a system based on moralism. However divergent on other points, everyone has been agreed as to the existence of the moral law and as to the necessity of obeying that law. The monistic materialism of Haeckel and Büchner is quite as rigid on this point as the "Imitatio Christi." Whether orthodox or heterodox in matters of religion, certain it is that every thinker, or every thinker with, perhaps, the exception of the pre-Socratic Hellenic philosophers and of Max Stirner in the middle of the nineteenth Christian century—every thinker, with these exceptions, has been orthodox with regard to the moral law. This law, mysterious, undefined and intangible, has been the arbitrator to which all causes have appealed, whose decision is final and irrevocable. The "Rechtsstaat" of Kant and Fichte is grounded on the principle that the individual shall be regarded as an end in himself and not as a means, which is a distinctly moral principle. The whole school of classical liberalism is based on a moral basis. Every party, every social system, every philosophy, when wishing to justify itself, seeks to show that its doctrines are the most in harmony with the moral law. And, as a matter of fact, that system which is considered to contain the strongest dose of moralism is also held to be the most justified.

All this belief in a moral law, in a categorical imperative, is based on the belief that, as M. Ferdinand Brunetière expresses it, "truth is something exterior to us and above us, removed by its very definition from the fluctuations of personal opinion." The Moral Law is exterior to man, and superior to him. Over and above the world of nature is super-

posed the moral world, the world of "Sollen," the world of the categorical imperative. The world of morals dominates the world of nature; and the history of the evolution of the world is, in a sense, the history of the conflict between these two worlds, humanity becoming civilised in the measure that the world of morals asserts its supremacy, and relapsing into barbarism whenever the world of nature gains the upper hand.

Man is perpetually torn by the contest within him. On the one hand, his natural instincts and passions seek to assert themselves, refuse to be suppressed, and fight for existence. On the other hand, these natural instincts and passions are perpetually opposed by the mysterious voice of conscience, that terribly talkative personage which moralists have invented in order to represent the moral world. Every time a natural instinct or passion of man seeks to assert itself, it finds itself opposed by a "still, small voice" which murmurs: "That is immoral, therefore it is wrong." Thus is morality a sort of counter-balance to nature.

As long as morality was connected with religion, its imperative was less flagrantly absurd. For man, doubtless realising the abnormal position which he occupied, he, grain of matter or speck of dust, being opposed, as a moral creature, to the boundless and immoral universe, invented another world, which he imagined in the likeness of this present world, only superposed to the latter, only far greater, because eternal, because creator of the world of nature in which he lives. And thus the balance turned to the advantage of himself and of the moral world; for the latter being represented by a fraction of the natural world, and by the whole of the supernatural



world and its supernatural powers, was the only world which counted for aught. By this means the world of nature was rendered despicable, was belittled, calumniated, represented as the work of the "Powers of Darkness," while the moral world, with its supernatural sanctions, overwhelming and overshadowing the natural world, became the "real" world.

The task of Christianity, which identified the good with the divine, and which taught that everything good came from God, and everything evil from the devil—that is to say, from the world of nature which is the devil's creation—was thus rendered easy. And in truth the moral law requires a supernatural sanction. We have only to compare the Gospels, which can be understood of every child, with the laborious and herculean efforts of Kant, in order to understand the difficulty of establishing what the French call "*une morale laïque*" on a firm basis.

However, we will pass over the religious aspect of the question, which will be discussed later on, and confine ourselves to the *morale laïque*—that is to say, to the moral law without supernatural sanction of any sort, which pretends to find its basis either in the human conscience, or else attempts its justification as a sociological necessity, pure and simple. And, in truth, it is seldom that an attempt is made nowadays to prove the existence of the moral law on purely theological grounds. Even the professed apologists of the various religious beliefs are aware of the extremely unstable nature of those beliefs, and are glad to find some more solid foundation for morality than the existence of God. For theologians in distress, as well as for all those who, although rejecting openly supernatural beliefs, nevertheless

cling to their belief in morality and in the moral law as a last remnant of the old faith, Kant, with his "Critique of Practical Reason," has proved a welcome benefactor.

What Nietzsche claimed to do was to place himself above and beyond the moral law, above and beyond the good and the bad. From this objective standpoint he claimed to have reversed all the tables of values which humanity has worshipped up till now, and to substitute for them his own new tables, whose laws should be the opposite of those proclaimed by the lawgivers of past times and up till the present day.

Immoralism is the basis of Nietzsche's creed, and yet Nietzsche is compelled to admit the existence of certain rules which govern human society ; and the best proof of this is that he arrives at the establishment of two distinct systems of morals : that of the masters and that of the slaves. But we must admit that Nietzsche's new table of values which he would substitute for the one prevailing at the present moment, may fairly claim to be a table of immoral values. For, if we admit that sympathy, respect for the rights of others, goodness of heart, are "moral" qualities, it is incontestable that hardness, cruelty, contempt for the supposed rights of the weaker, are immoral.

Another question is that of Nietzsche's originality. Evidently Nietzsche is not the first philosopher to question the validity of the Kantian imperative, with its notion of absolute and immutable duty. To take only one example, Nietzsche's own master, Schopenhauer, had made a luminous and exhaustive *critique* of the Kantian imperative. But



Schopenhauer had admitted, and very distinctly preconised, the value of morality and the necessity of morality for humanity. But this is precisely what Nietzsche calls in question, and the fundamental problem of the value of the very notion of morality itself is his starting point. "Morality has been the neutral territory on which, in spite of all mistrust, disagreement and contradiction, one has met in common accord; it is the sacred haven of peace, where philosophers and thinkers rest from their efforts, where they breathe and live again," he declares in the "Gaya Scienza." But Nietzsche has "circumnavigated the idealist lake" and discovered new lands, far removed from this neutral territory of morality. "We nameless, unprecedented, almost incomprehensible early products of a future which is still a riddle—we need a new means to a new end—namely, new health, better, stronger, more resisting, merrier health than that which has prevailed up till now. He whose soul longs to have made acquaintance with all the values and all the desires which humanity has nursed up till now, who longs to have circumnavigated this idealist lake, who wishes to learn from his own experience, as is fitting in a conqueror and explorer of Ideals . . . he must first of all possess *robust health*—robust health, such as one must always conquer and reconquer, because one must also perpetually sacrifice it! . . . And now, after having been a long while on our journey, we Argonauts of the Ideal, perhaps more courageous than clever, often enough shipwrecked, and yet healthier than our opponents could wish us—dangerously healthy, in fact—it seems as if, as a reward, an undiscovered Land, stands before our eyes, whose frontiers no one

knows, a land beyond all other lands, a world so overflowingly wealthy in beauty, in strange things, in mystery, in terrifying and also divine things, as to excite beyond measure our curiosity and our desire of possession." <sup>1</sup>

But before this promised land of the future, this Canaan of milk and honey, can be conquered, it is essential that the moral prejudices which prevail to-day should disappear. For what in reality is this moral law of which philosophers are for ever talking, and which is thrust on us at every moment until its presence becomes an obsession? It is certain that the moral law first originated with man. The rest of nature is absolutely and profoundly immoral. So long as the old teleological conception of the world-processes prevailed, so long as man was opposed to nature, was represented as something distinct from, and higher than, nature, it could be asserted that man was a moral being. And, as a matter of fact, the moral law finds its only true sanction, its only reasonable sanction, in religion. For, on the supposition that God exists, that a supernatural world is above the world of nature, and superposed to it, and dominating it, this supernatural world could be held as representing, as incarnating, the moral law; and thus man "created in God's image," in the image of the world of morals, is an essentially, and a primordially, moral creature; and thus also the world of morals, incarnated in the Omnipotent Power of God, is the only world that counts, this world of ours being a mere atom, a mere passing fantasy of the omnipotent Power.

From this Biblical point of view, the explanation of the moral law, and its justification, are rendered

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," v. 342, 343.



easy. The essence of man being moral, immorality is contrary to man's essence, to that which is fundamental in his character, as well as being a sin against his creator and benefactor. From this point of view, also, the moral imperative is categorical and admits of no discussion. In order to raise the moral law above the fluctuations of personal opinion, and place it there where alone its nature can be regarded as eternal, as immutable, it is necessary to associate it with a higher Power which is also eternal and immutable.

But the progress of exegesis has rendered this basing of the moral law on alleged eternal and immutable religious truth very dangerous; and all those who are far-sighted and clear-headed enough to understand the consequences of modern exegetical research on supernatural beliefs, are anxious to seek some more solid foundation for the moral law than a vanishing faith. To these persons, as we have said, Kant has proved a benefactor, and the success of Kant, as Nietzsche remarks, must be attributed to the fact that the Königsberg philosopher was a theologian in disguise. Nietzsche has understood Kant's work better than Heinrich Heine understood it. He saw that the two volumes of the "Critique" are not opposed to each other; and he saw that, in the "Critique of Pure Reason," Kant strove not only to demonstrate the impossibility of attaining to any knowledge of the world of noumena, but that by showing the insufficiency of our sensible intuition, and by maintaining the absence of any intelligible intuition, he also placed the entities of the world of noumena—God, soul, immortality—outside the reach of hostile criticism. These entities, already sheltered from hostile criticism by the "Critique of Pure Reason," are

subsequently reintroduced as postulates of Practical Reason, as necessitated by the existence of the categorical imperative, taken by Kant for proven *a priori*.

But Kant's system of practical reason has long been attacked on various sides. The most important breaches in the system have been effected by the utilitarian and evolutionist schools, and by Schopenhauer. Knowing as he did the work of Bentham and John Stuart Mill, being himself a disciple of Schopenhauer, and following immediately on Spencer, Nietzsche could hardly pretend to have been the first to call in question the value of the Kantian imperative with its characteristics of universality and universal necessity. But the English utilitarians, he argued, have contented themselves with a history of the evolution of morals, without calling in question the fundamental validity of the moral law itself. Further they have given us a history of morals which is misleading, which is unhistorical, and which is false and unhistorical because these utilitarians have allowed themselves to be blinded by prejudice, and have identified everywhere the good with the useful, the bad with the useless, which is incorrect.

But to return to our question. We do not propose to examine here Nietzsche's own conception of the genealogy of morals or the value of the immoralist doctrine. We are examining the obstacles which Nietzsche finds in the way of establishing his ideal of life in all its power and plenitude, of life overflowing with exuberant vitality and seeking to manifest itself and to expend its strength by all the means in its power, by the creation of beauty, by the infliction of suffering, by seeking to know all the secrets of life, its joys and tears, its hopes and disappointments, its



adventures and hardships. And one of the chief obstacles to the realisation of this ideal of super-abundant life is the existence of the moral law.

The moral law signifies the subordination of man to an external power, just as the religious law does. Morality, as Max Stirner pointed out in "Der Einzige und sein Eigentum," is religion in disguise. Nietzsche has no knowledge of Stirner's work, nor does he appear even to have heard of Stirner or of that curious, rigorously logical and unanswerable book "The Unique and his Property," for we should otherwise certainly find an elaborate eulogy of Stirner in his works. But Nietzsche says a lot of what Stirner said before him, as he has also said some things which Renan and Taine, Flaubert and Stendhal in the nineteenth, La Rochefoucauld in the eighteenth, century have said. Stirner pointed out with merciless logic that the subordination of man to a moral law is the subordination of man to an external power, just as is the case with the religions. And this moral law is something exterior to man, something alien to man, for man is a part of nature, and nature is profoundly immoral. The world of the supernatural having been destroyed by modern exegetical research, and the world of the supernatural being the *raison-d'être* of the world of morals, the world of morals disappears also. For is it not ridiculous and unreasonable to suppose man, an insignificant parcel of nature, opposed to the whole of the rest of nature? And if we declare man to be the "summit of creation" what do we mean? If we mean that man is the centre of creation and the *end* of all creation, we fall into the error of the geocentric theory, which supposes this planet of ours to be the centre of the universe; we fall back into the teleological error, which supposes

a *reason* ("Zweck") in the world-process, which sees in the world-process the reflection of a conscious Will; and here are we back at the theistic point of view. If, however, we mean that man is the most perfect specimen of creation from the physical standpoint, we are wrong on a matter of fact. Physically, man is absolutely inferior to the carnivora, and if he possesses any superiority it resides in his more developed brain-power, which however does not at all compensate for his physical inferiority. So that if we accept the existence of a moral law, independent and autonomous, unconnected with any theistic idea, we arrive at the paradoxical result of opposing man, as a moral creature, to the rest of nature, which is immoral.

But this is precisely what does distinguish man from the brute, and from inorganic nature, you reply. There is implanted in each one of us a moral law, identical in its ultimate aim for all times and in all places, and this moral law speaks to us through the voice of conscience. Our conscience commands, and we obey. We disobey, and our conscience tortures us with its reproaches.

To this objection Nietzsche has replied by a "critique" of the human conscience, which, although scattered throughout his various books, forms a whole, complete and rigorous. It is time for us to examine this notion of conscience, and to put in question its validity.

After examination we find, as a matter of fact, that our "conscience" is but another term for the accumulation of all our instincts, whether these be derived from heredity or from education or from habit, which is a second nature. We have, all of us, accumulated in our physical and mental constitution an



indefinite quantity of tendencies, which we call congenital tendencies, which are derived from parents and ancestors. These accumulated tendencies, which cause us to resemble our parents and ancestors in a degree more or less considerable, play a very important rôle in our mental as well as in our physical life. In our physical life their influence is somatically obvious. In our mental life their influence is not less obvious, only it is necessary sometimes to search for it. It is evident that ancestral influences must be taken into account in judging of the value of "conscience." The "conscience" of one man, with certain ancestral influences behind him, will be totally different to that of another man conditioned by totally different ancestral influences. One man is pious, one is naturally disposed to the study of natural science, another is brutal, another is of a delicate and refined disposition, one is frank and candid, another is *rusé* and Machiavellian; one is full of exuberant life, another is sickly and weak; and the "conscience" of each—that is, his manner of thinking, of reasoning, and of judging persons and things—will be shaped accordingly.

And then the influence of education and of the surrounding environment must be taken into consideration. We cannot maintain that a hooligan, brought up in an atmosphere of filth and vice, will have the same conscience as a man brought up in the home of an aristocrat of St James's. And the aristocrat of the West End is certain to have a conscience quite differently formed to the conscience of a man who has been brought up among the Quakers. But these are extreme examples of a universal law. That law is that no two men are alike; that the differences resulting from heredity and education, sometimes

reduced to a minimum, sometimes raised to a maximum, are always present and always active. And how much of our supposed "conscience" is merely the result of heredity and education? Here we have two men, two friends. The one is religiously disposed from childhood up; he is educated in a religious family; he goes to Oxford, where religious idealism is the prevailing sentiment; he rarely, if ever, travels, he is never taken away from the influence of the family and home life. The other man is by nature sceptical, apt at reasoning; circumstances cause him to travel extensively, to see many lands and many peoples; he has no family influence to counteract the ever-growing spirit of independence and self-reliance which emancipates him from all religious trammels, which prepares him to receive every new idea, every new influence, with sympathy. The conscience of the first man will be deeply tinged with that religious and somewhat austere influence which is derived from his family life, and from university influences, which can be great. The conscience of the second man will reflect the emancipating influence exercised by travelling, by much intercourse with foreign peoples and ideals; for the education of travel is as powerful in the influence it exerts as the education of a university. Here are two men totally different in character; this difference will be manifested in the manner in which they appreciate events; the "conscience" of each will be different.

And then the question arises: why do you consider such and such an act to be right, such other one to be wrong? Because my conscience tells me it is right or wrong, you say. But why is your conscience thus called in as arbitrator? What claim has it to infallibility? Your conscience is a part of yourself.



It has been formed by all sorts of accumulations of influences, hereditary and mesological. How can a part of yourself be infallible? How can that part of a whole which is immoral be moral? And by what standard do you judge of the righteousness of your judgments, of the judgments of your conscience? Obviously, you judge and you appreciate according to your mental habits, and your mental habits are simply the result of heredity and education. And WHY do you obey your conscience? Answer that question, my friend. Is your obedience real or feigned? Do you listen to the voice of conscience as a hypocrite, who needs to cloak his vices with the mantle of virtue? Do you listen as a coward, afraid to probe your conscience to the bottom? Do you listen mechanically, because you are too indolent to examine your conscience? Do you listen and obey as a soldier listens to and obeys his officer, automatically, without reflecting? For there are many ways of listening to the voice of conscience.

But there is another question: every judgment which you make, which you say your conscience makes, is it disinterested, or is it selfish, egotistical? "You embrace your neighbour and have soft words for him. But I say unto you: your love of your neighbour is but your love of yourself, falsified." Already La Rochefoucauld had expressed the same idea, and had called attention to the interested and egotistical character of all our acts. But whereas La Rochefoucauld merely denied the *reality* of altruism, but maintained the theory of the supreme value of altruism, Nietzsche denies, not merely the reality of altruistic sentiments, but the value of them. Egoism is the best, and the greatest, and the only *real* thing in life. Everything else is phantasm, and

perhaps error ; but egoism, the love of life, and the affirmation of one's life and of oneself, is real and tangible. And it is a natural sentiment, perhaps the only natural one. What is unnatural, what is unreal, what is very distinctly ugly, is the masquerading of egoism under the mantle of altruism, disinterestedness, and other specious and sonorous words. Every act which we commit is inspired by egoism. And how could it be otherwise ? An act which is not inspired by the desire to preserve our own life—that is to say, to affirm our own life—must be an act inspired by the contrary desire—namely, the desire to destroy life. But the characteristic of modern pessimism is precisely a fear of its own logical consequences. The pessimist, who regards life as an evil, takes refuge in scepticism. “ When to-day a philosopher gives it to be understood that he is no sceptic . . . the world hears the announcement with regret ; one examines him curiously, not without shyness, one would like to ask so many questions . . . yes, there is no doubt about it, among his frightened hearers, whose number is legion, he passes henceforth for a dangerous man. It seems to them as if they heard a distant, terrifying noise, as if some new explosive were being tried, some mental dynamite, perhaps some newly discovered Russian nihilin, by this pessimist *bonæ voluntatis*, who not only says No, and desires the Non-Being, but also—horrible thought !—puts his negative theories into practice.”<sup>1</sup> There seems no doubt about it ; theoretically pessimism may flourish, as it indeed does to-day ; but, practically, its consequences are avoided—that is to say, suicide is avoided. Which does not mean that other consequences, scepticism, the denial of will-power, the disgust of life, do not follow ; and

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vii. 152.



these consequences are as bad as, perhaps worse in their ultimate consequences than, general suicide.

However, pursuing our examination, we find that the greatest disgust of life, every form of asceticism and mortification, nay, suicide itself, are but expressions of the sentiment of egoism. Schopenhauer's theory of suicide, as being in reality the strongest affirmation of the desire of life, is well known. But all those conditions of life preconised by Schopenhauer as means to abolishing in us that desire of life, mortifications of the flesh, asceticism, sequestration, self-torture, slow and gradual voluntary suicide—are these conditions of life really expressions of the negation of the desire of life? No; he who mortifies his body, subjects it to every privation and torture, is perhaps the most egotistical of us all. For he is ready to sacrifice all those conditions which are commonly regarded as rendering life tolerable, in order to satisfy his desire of life. his desire for affirming life, his desire for *pleasure*. The ascetic enjoys life after his fashion; and his asceticism merely proves that his conception of an enjoyable life differs from the ordinary conception, that he himself is an abnormal creation, probably a pathological one. The same argument which Schopenhauer has rightly employed against the theory of suicide as an act inspired by hostility to life, may equally be applied to the ascetic ideal.

We are egotistical in our love—we are most thoroughly egotistical in our love for others, which is egoism strengthened and fortified. We love others as a means of conquering them, as a means of seducing them; our love is but an expression of our Will of Power and of domination.

But if there is nothing but egoism, and if altruism is but a term devoid of any reality, what becomes of

the reality of the moral law, whose foundation is altruism? The utilitarian school have maintained that the interest of all and the interest of each coincide in the long run. But, in the first place, this is reducing the categorical imperative to a mere calculation of profit and loss. And, in the second place, the utilitarian theory is demonstrably wrong in fact. Individual interests are not invariably identical with the interests of society. The interests of the masters are not only not identical, but are very greatly opposed, to the interests of the populace.

Thus the whole of the categorical imperative of the conscience reduces itself upon examination to the mental habits acquired partly from heredity, partly from education. And this imperative of the conscience, by what is it controllable? By the conscience? Here we are at a deadlock. And yet the reply must be affirmative. The conscience, accumulation of mental habits derived from different sources, controls itself. For the "conscience of humanity" is a phantom. The "conscience of humanity" is a term embracing all the different consciences of the myriads of individuals which compose humanity, each of them differing, in a degree more or less great, from the others.

The truth seems to be this: the instincts of every man—that is to say, that which is fundamental in our nature—incite us to *affirm* life in every circumstance, incite us to realise life in all its plenitude, to live *wholly*. The so-called moral law is an accumulation of mental prejudices, due to various historical conditions, which have caused the stronger races, those who could afford to live according to their instincts and to give full vent to their passions, to be vanquished by the weaker races, triumph the



concrete symbol of which is the Christian religion, the religion of sympathy and pity. These weaker races, weaker physically and mentally, had nevertheless more cunning, more patience, more *ruse* than their adversaries. Their weapon was the moral law, first under the form of a revelation from God, subsequently under the form of the categorical imperative. The moral law is merely the expression of the ideals of this weaker race—that is to say, of their character, which is at once treacherous and lying and revengeful and cowardly and miserably weak. The victory of Christianity has done more for the establishment of the moral law than any other event in the history of the world. The moral law has laid hold of humanity. And yet when we come to examine this law, this moral imperative, what do we find? An accumulation of mental habits, derived partly from heredity, partly from education, partly from experience, controllable by nothing except itself, whose claim to infallibility and immutability is absurd, but which tyrannises us, although it is but our own creation, the fruit of a somewhat morbid imagination.

Another point to be noticed in connection with the moral law is its extreme anti-natural, anti-vital tendency. Morality is the greatest enemy of life and of all that is fundamental in life. In the name of morality we are called upon to crush out or at any rate to fight bitterly against our instincts, against that which lies at the very root of life, against that which conditions life. This in itself, and if it were alone, would suffice to condemn morality. The aim of life, the only possible aim of life, is the affirmation of itself, because the object of life, as far as we know the only object, is to *live*,

and to manifest itself, and to realise all its possibilities. The strong man, the real man, he who loves life and is not afraid of it, loves all that life contains, its risks and adventures, its tears and sufferings, its disappointments and disillusion, as much as its joys and victories. And the *great* passions, all of them are but signs of exuberant and healthy vitality, of a vitality which seeks to break down the barriers imposed on it by artificial means, such as the moral law, and which seeks the only life worth living, the *integral* life. For the great man all the passions are equally legitimate, equally necessary to the affirmation of life; hate as much as love, revenge as much as sympathy, lust as much as chastity, anger as much as goodness; and hate, revenge, lust, anger, brutality, hardness of heart, are the virile passions, the only passions worthy of the great man and of the strong man, who knows how to give vent to them, and who is sufficiently his own master to know how and when to control them. "The mastery over one's passions, not their destruction or weakening! The greater the force of the will, the greater the amount of liberty which can be granted to the passions of the soul. The great man is great on account of the freedom with which he gives vent to his passions, and through the still greater power which he manifests in keeping these wild animals in check and placing them at his service."<sup>1</sup> But the weaker race, the masses, with their instinctive hatred of the strong and the mighty, at the hands of whom they have had so often to suffer, have condemned in the moral law all these virile passions as "immoral." They have invented the "good man," he who is also the weak man and

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xv. 480.



the inferior type of humanity, and who is too weak, too degenerate to know the supreme beauty and joy of giving vent to the most intense passions that surge within the human breast in complete liberty, the joy of giving vent to those virile passions as a luxury, of employing them as a means of affirming and of satisfying life ; only he who is powerful enough to possess great passions and yet be so complete a master of them as to be able to control them, who can give them all liberty, so as to taste thus the full joy of life, and yet withhold them when they menace his safety ; only he can know the value of the passions.

“ For every strong man who has remained true to nature, love and hate, gratitude and revenge, kindness and anger, yes and no, are but one. One is good on condition that one can also be bad ; one is bad because one could not otherwise be good. Whence came that plague and that anti-natural ideology which abolished this dualism ?—which held out onesidedness as the ideal ? Whence this hemiplegic condition of virtue, this discovery of the ‘ good man ’ ? . . . It is required that man should cut himself off from every instinct, by reason of which he can be converted into an enemy, or on account of which he can inflict damage, or can be angry, or can plan revenge ? . . . This anti-natural conception corresponds with that dualistic idea of a wholly good and a wholly bad Being (God, Spirit, Man), the first of which sums up all positive, the latter all negative, forces, intentions and conditions. . . . This conception does not therefore even deem it necessary that every contradiction between good and bad shall condition reciprocally its antithesis. On the contrary, the bad must disappear and the

good alone remain, the one has a right to existence, the other should not exist at all." <sup>1</sup>

This conception is anti-natural and false. One-sidedness is contrary to nature. Our passions, being part of our nature, are intended to be manifested, subject to the ultimate control of the Will. There is no question of morality here; the maintenance of life, the consolidation and affirmation of life, which is the only object of life so far as we know, demands that free play shall be given to the passions, certainly; but it also demands *that the passions shall be in the service of man, and not man in the service of his passions*. He alone has a right to give free play to his passions, to the great and dangerous passions of hate and revenge and lust of conquest, who is also the master of his passions, to whom the passions are as a luxury, and a luxury necessary to the full realisation of life, but which must be kept in hand, like unto the pack of hounds obedient to the call of the huntsman. To be the slave of one's passions—like the criminal of the slums—is a sign of degeneracy and weakness. But the moral law condemns all the virile passions, because those who invented it were not strong enough to know the value of these passions, because they could not give vent to them without at once allowing themselves to be dominated by them; and thus the virile passions represented to them, to these weaklings, an element destructive of life. Not with impunity can one give free play to one's passions; one must be worthy of this luxury, and rich enough to afford it, rich enough in strength and in Will-Power. And then the stronger races have invariably utilised the weaker ones as a field of experiments for the play of their passions.

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xv. 219, 220.



Thus have the weaker races, the inventors of the moral law, suffered doubly from the passions, suffered through themselves and suffered through others, and it is but natural on their part that the passions should be condemned by them.

But it does not ensue that this condemnation of the passions is not profoundly anti-natural. The passions are a sign of healthy and exuberant vitality ; like most things, they must not be used abusively ; their use has its limits, a limit well defined, and the penalty of overstepping which is decay and death. But the strong man knows his strength ; he knows the limit of his strength ; and he can afford to give vent to his passions, he *must* give vent to them, not only as a safety-valve, but a means of enriching life and completing life. The man who knows no passions is a weak man, a hemiplegic, miserable creature. It is not the brigand or the “ man of prey ” that is a pathological manifestation, but the “ good man,” he who lives shut up in his narrow corner, knowing nothing of those almost boundless expanses of life which only the bold and the brave can explore. The passions are the expression of our “ primitive self,” a remnant of the “ brute,” but beautiful in the revelation which they afford of the strength of life, of the manifold wealth of life.

Morality is a partial paralysis of life. For, as a matter of fact, it does paralyse the energies of the man who listens to its commands. It orders him to sacrifice himself for others—that is to say, it orders him to suppress the chief, the only, incitement to action, which is the prospect of enriching and beautifying his own life. It orders him to consecrate all his activity, all his energy, all his capacity, not to the embellishment of his own existence or to the

development of his own creative power, but for the benefit of others, of others who will neither benefit by his activity nor be grateful for it. Thus does morality not only paralyse life, it renders it ugly, it destroys whatever beauty may be in it.

It destroys its beauty by substituting for a manifold and exuberant variety a dull and sickening uniformity ; or at least by trying to substitute such a uniformity, for it seems as if the attainment of this odious ideal were at least difficult. " Let us consider the utter unintelligence of such a statement as : ' Thus and thus ought man to be.' Reality shows us a beautiful richness of types, an extravagant exuberance of forms and changes ; and some wretched stick-in-the-corner moralist comes up and says : ' No ! Man ought to be otherwise.' He even knows, this church mouse, how and what man ought to be—he paints his image of man on the wall and cries, ' Ecce Homo.' But even when the moralist turns to the solitary individual and says to him : ' Thus and thus shouldest thou be,' he does not cease making himself ridiculous. The individual is a piece of Fate, something which belongs to the past and to the future, a law and a necessity for everything which is and which will be. To say to him ' Change thyself ' is equivalent to desiring the world to change itself, indeed to move backwards." <sup>1</sup>

The moral law is thus another of the great obstacles to the realisation of Nietzsche's ideal. The mere fact of causing man to subordinate his personality to an external power, is in itself a hindrance to the *integral* life. And if it be replied that man's conscience is not external to him, it may be replied that

<sup>1</sup> " Werke," viii. 89, 90.



it is not, indeed, external to him in reality, but that it is an accumulation of prejudices, habits and experiences, derived either from heredity or from the surrounding environment; only the categorical imperative supposes the conscience as commanding to man in the name of—what? In the name of Reason, reply moralists since Kant. But this Reason, what sort of abstract entity is it? If we look further, we find that all the categorical imperatives which command man to obey the summons of his conscience in the name of some higher power, merely command him to obey the summons of his prejudices, habits and experiences, in the name of—? In the name of those same mental habits.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RELIGIONS

WE have said already that Nietzsche's is a deeply religious character. Taking the word religion in the sense of being the cult of an ideal, few thinkers have been so idealistic, so passionately idealistic, as the creator of Zarathustra. But to say of Nietzsche that his was a religious nature, in the sense of belonging to any particular creed, would be absurd. If there has never been a greater idealist than Friedrich Nietzsche, there has never been a greater atheist. Zarathustra is the destroyer of God, he teaches perpetually that "God is dead." But the idea of an anthropomorphic God in itself may have been indifferent to Nietzsche. Himself a convinced atheist, he nevertheless never regarded religious belief with hostility. The sectarian animosity and ferocious narrowmindedness of a French Radical and Freemason was, of course, a thing unknown to a spirit like Nietzsche's. But what Nietzsche hates in the idea of God, what he attacks most bitterly in that idea, is the "moral God," the God of Christianity, the God of the poor and humble, the God of love and forgiveness and sympathy. It is against the Christian conception of God, not against the conception of God in itself, that his attacks are directed. His attacks against God are directed against those who have created the Christian God, against the "slaves," against the Jews, against the rabble, whose ideal is the ideal of Christianity, whose



character is reflected in the God of their creation. Nietzsche has no objection to the conception of God in itself, provided that God be represented as the Will of Power—that is to say, provided he be a God created by a strong race and reflecting the character of that race, their might and courage and *insouciance* and lust of conquest. Such a God was Jahweh, the old God of Israel, the mysterious and jealous God, echoes of whose might reach us in the Old Testament.

“ A race which believes in itself still has its own god. It honours in the God those conditions thanks to which it has been successful—it symbolises its own desires, its own consciousness of power, in a Being to whom it can be thankful for that consciousness. He who is rich, gives ; a proud people need a god to whom they can sacrifice. Religion under such conditions is a form of gratitude. One is thankful for oneself, for one’s power ; therefore one needs a god. Such a god must be both useful and harmful, he must be able to be at once friend and foe, one admires in him things good and bad. That anti-natural castration of a god which reduces him to a god of the just only, would in this case be quite unwished for. One needs the bad god as well as the good one, for it is not precisely to tolerance of humanitarianism that one owes one’s own existence. What would be the use of a god to whom anger, revenge, envy, sarcasm, cunning, violence, were unknown ? To whom even the glorious *ardeurs* of the hour of triumph and destruction were perhaps unknown ? One would not understand such a deity ; why should one have him ? But when a race decays, when it feels its belief in the future, its hope of liberty, finally vanishing ; when submission appears to it as the most useful policy, and the virtues of the slave present themselves to the

conscience of its members as a condition of existence ; then must also the idea of the god change. The god becomes nervous, fearful, humble, recommends the 'peace of mind,' preaches against hatred, recommends cautiousness and 'love,' both of friend and foe ; he is perpetually moralising, he becomes everybody's god, becomes a private gentleman, becomes cosmopolitan. Formerly he represented a people, the force of a great people, all that is aggressive and thirsting after power in the soul of a great people ; now he is merely the 'good' god. As a matter of fact there is no other alternative for gods : either they symbolise the Will of Power—and in this case they are national or racial gods ; or else they symbolise the impotency to attain power—and in this case they are necessarily good." <sup>1</sup>

A god symbolising the Will of Power was Jahweh, the old God of Israel. "The history of Israel is invaluable as a typical history of the denaturalisation of natural values ; I can cite five examples of this. Originally, especially in the time of the Kings, Israel stood in a natural—that is, in a right—relation to all things. Its Jahweh was the expression of the consciousness of power, of self-satisfaction, of belief in self ; one expected from Jahweh victory and salvation, one expected from him that nature should bring forth what was necessary to the people—especially rain. Jahweh is the God of Israel and *consequently* the God of Justice and Right : this is the logic of every race which is great and powerful, and which has good conscience of its power." <sup>2</sup> But as time went on came the Assyrian conquest and the Babylonian captivity, and the belief in themselves,

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," viii. 232, 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 244, 245.



the hope of the future, the hope of, and confidence in, victory, gradually disappeared and gave place to a feeling of despair, of resignation, of submission. It was during the Babylonian captivity that the greatest transformation seems to have taken place. Exiled from their land, prisoners among a strange and "heathen" race, the people of Israel's spirit was broken, the old aggressive spirit, long undermined, was finally vanquished, and "resignation" and "submission to Fate" took its place. This change in the character of the people was, of course, reflected in the change undergone by their conception of the deity. Jahweh, the "jealous God," the god of victory and conquest, was gradually replaced by another god, more cosmopolitan, more humane, by a god of pity and love, the god suited to the character of a subject-race, and the exact opposite to the god of the conquering race. Out of this god, growing ever more humane, ever more moral—that is to say, ever weaker—was evolved the Christian conception of God, the ideal deity of the rabble, of all that which is weak and miserable and unhappy and unsuccessful, and who lust after the power they are impotent to attain except by *rusé* and cunning.

But the Christian God, poor as is his conception, has gradually been succeeded by a yet poorer and more vaporous sort of God.

"When the conditions of *exalted* life, when everything strong, brave, domineering, proud has been eliminated from the idea of God, when he sinks step by step to a mere symbol of weariness, to a sheet-anchor for the drowning, when he becomes the god of the poor, of sinners and of invalids *par excellence*, and when the predicate "Messiah," "Redeemer," becomes a predicate of the divinity in

general: what story does such a transformation, such a reduction of the idea of God, recount? The 'Kingdom of God' has certainly been enlarged. . . . But the god of the 'greater number,' the democrat among the gods, was nevertheless anything but a proud heathen deity. He remained a Jew, he remained the god of the back parlour, of all the dark corners and hiding-places of the unhealthy quarters of the globe. His world-empire remained an underground empire, a hospital, a ghetto-empire. And God himself, so pale, so feeble, so degenerate! Even the palest among pale persons, the metaphysicians themselves, succeeded in getting hold of him. And, like spiders, they spun around him so long, until at last, hypnotised by their movements, he became himself a spider and a metaphysician. Now we see him projecting the world out of himself 'sub specie Spinozæ'—and now we watch him as he gradually transfigures himself into something ever thinner and paler; he becomes an 'Ideal,' a 'pure Spirit,' an 'Absolute' a 'thing in itself!' . . . *The fall of a God*: God becomes the 'thing in itself!' <sup>1</sup> . . ."

Thus when Nietzsche attacks the idea of God, it is in reality the idea of the moral law which he attacks. He attacks that ideal, which he represents to be the ideal of the slaves, of the toilers, of the masses, of the rabble, of those who are impotent to attain power and yet lust after power. Unable to subdue or subjugate the strong races, the masters, by physical force and in open combat, they adopt all sorts of tortuous means, cunning, *ruse*, patience, hypocrisy, in order to vanquish those strong races and to conquer power for themselves. The most gigantic piece of "tartufferie," of cunning and *ruse*, ever adopted for

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," viii. 234, 235.



the subjugation and castration of the strong man, is the Christian religion. The triumph of this religion marks the triumph of the slaves. They have triumphed through having made *their* ideals—ideals of revenge and hatred and envy, sharpened by their consciousness of impotency—the ideals of universal and necessary good. They have transvaluated all the natural values. For the strong man, good is synonymous with strong, with beautiful, with powerful and mighty. For the weak man, the slave, who has to bear the weight of the might, exercised without compunction, of the strong man, good is, on the contrary, synonymous with weakness, with impotency, with ugliness and poverty. “Blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the ‘pure in heart.’” The ideal of the slaves, the ideal of weakness and impotency and ugliness, is raised by Christianity into an universal law. The slaves need mercy, because they are afraid of their masters, because they are cowardly ; they exalt humility, because obsequiousness is part of the character of the slave ; they exalt the “purity of heart,” they talk about the “advent of the Kingdom of God,” in order to cloak their own envy, hatred and malice against all that which they are not, which they cannot possess, beauty, strength, mental and material wealth. With the triumph of Christianity, triumph due to the degeneracy of the stronger races brought on by their own fault and by their neglect of biological law, the values of the slaves (good=weak=humble=merciful=sickly and poor) triumphed also, and became “universal laws,” prevailing at all times and in all places. Never was greater effrontery shown.

During nineteen centuries Christianity has retarded the progress of civilisation and obstructed the onward

march of humanity. But Christianity is itself but a successor of the old Jewish religion, it is itself essentially Jewish, the creation of Jews, reflecting all the prejudices and mental habits of the Jews. "The Jews are the most remarkable people in the history of the world, because, having been confronted by the question of Being and Not Being, they have, with quite uncanny self-consciousness, preferred *Being at any price*; this price was the radical *falsification* of nature, of everything natural, of all reality, both of the inner and of the outer world. They shut themselves out from all those conditions under which a people can live, and under which a people may live, they created, out of their own imagination, a conception of the world opposed to all natural conditions; one after the other they have inverted religion, ritual, morality, history, psychology, in the most pernicious way, and have set them in opposition to their natural value. . . . The Jews are on this account the most epoch-making people in the history of the world; through their influence they have falsified humanity to such a degree that the Christian can feel himself an anti-Semite without even having conscience of himself as the final consequence of Judaism." <sup>1</sup>

The victory of Christianity has been the most pernicious event in the history of the world, because it has signified the elimination of one standard of morals and the complete monopoly of another and baser set. The genealogy of morals is to be explained on anthropological grounds. There are, or were originally, two systems of morals in contradiction with each other. The one is the system of the masters. The race of the masters, the superior race, the race

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," viii. 243.



which Gobineau and Nietzsche, together with the modern school of anthroposociology, identify with the Aryan race, *homo europæus*, whose physical and mental superiority is accompanied by parallel anthropological features which appear to denote a report of causality between the two—this race has its system of morals which is exclusively its own. For this race of strong and brave men, for this race of conquerors, good is identical with strong, with brave, with aristocracy, of sentiment and taste, with the lust of conquest and revenge, with everything which *affirms* life and by which life manifests itself. On the other hand, this race of conquerors will consider as bad everything by which life is weakened or diminished, will consider bad as identical with weak, with cowardly, with lack of refinement in taste and sentiment; for it the cardinal virtue will be hardness of heart, and the cardinal vice sympathy. And this standpoint is natural when we consider that the characteristics of the race are intrepidity and *insouciance* in the face of danger and death, love of adventure and conquest; that its members are accustomed to inflict hardship and suffering on themselves, and therefore consider it right to inflict hardship and suffering on others. Again, the standpoint of the weaker race, of the race of slaves, is natural, when we consider that its chief characteristic is impotency, and that it is perpetually suffering from the inroads of the “barbarians,” as it terms the superior race. Conscious of its impotency, of its smallness and of its ugliness, the weaker race still thirsts after power. Especially does it thirst after revenge for all that it has suffered at the hands of its enemies. But how attain to that power, unless by tortuous and subterranean means? The weaker

race are gifted with greater cunning, greater *ruse*, and above all greater patience, than the race of conquerors, accustomed to fight in the open and to deal swift and crushing blows. Thirsting after power, the slaves utilise those qualities which they possess, cunning, *ruse*, patience; and the Christian religion is a result, and a tremendous result, of the exercise of these qualities. In the Christian religion everything is denaturalised. Good is rendered synonymous with weak, with sickly, with poor, with ugly; the "peace of mind," and forgiveness even of one's enemies, are preached; and so well have the masses done their work that this table of values, the slaves' table of values, has completely ousted the other table of values, that of the conquerors and masters who know neither forgiveness nor peace of mind. The slaves' table of values has been erected into a universal and immutable law.

The Christian religion was the work of the rabble, of the lowest classes of the populace. Its triumph was the triumph of a base instinct, thirsting for power and yet conscious of its impotency, and employing every subterranean means to attain its end. First among these means is hypocrisy, and of the most ignoble sort. This talk about the "elect," about "sanctity," about "the Kingdom of God," about "love" and "forgiveness," is the basest of hypocrisies, designed to cloak all the envy, hatred and malice of a weak and impotent race, conscious of its impotency and of its repulsiveness. In a brilliant page, Nietzsche has described the process of "manufacturing the Christian ideal."

" "Would someone like to descend into the mysterious catacombs where one can witness the *manufacture of an ideal*? Who has the requisite courage?



Come along ; from here the eye can penetrate into this dark workshop. Wait a minute, my bold friend ; your eye must accustom itself to this artificial and doubtful daylight. . . . Now ! it is all right ! Speak up ! What is going on down underneath there ? Tell me what you see, O my dangerously inquisitive friend. It is I who am now listening to you.'

"—' I see nothing, but I hear all the better. I hear murmurs and whispers which proceed, mysterious, hushed, discreet from all corners. It seems to me that they are lying ; a honey-like sweetness envelops every sound. It appears that weakness is to be changed into a merit by a sort of conjuring trick—there is no doubt about it, it is quite as you said.'

"—' And then ! '

"—' And impotency which is too feeble to do anything is to be changed into "goodness," ignoble cowardice into "humility," submission to those one hates becomes "obedience" (this obedience is due to someone who requires that submission, they say, and who is called God). The feebleness of the weak, the cowardice with which they are filled, the docility which remains at the door and waits patiently, all this is baptised by a new name : "patience"—which passes doubtless also for a virtue. The sentence, "I cannot avenge myself" becomes "I *will* not avenge myself," or even "I forgive them" (for *they* know not what they do—but we, we know what *they* do). . . . Then they talk about "loving their enemies"—and they sweat over it. . . .'

"—' And then ! '

"—' They are miserable, there is no doubt about it, all these false coiners, although they keep each other

warm—but they say that their misery is a proof that God distinguishes and chooses them ; does one not thrash the curs one likes best ? And perhaps this misery is but a preparation, a time of trial, a lesson—perhaps it is something still better ; something which some day will be indemnified at a heavy rate of interest—not in gold, no, but in happiness. They call this “ felicity.” ’

“—‘ Go on ! ’

“—‘ Now they give me to understand that not only are they better than the powerful and the masters of the world, whose spittings they have to lick (not out of fear, oh dear, no, not at all out of fear, but because God commands obedience to all authority)—but they are also richer than these, or at least they will be richer some day. Enough ! Enough ! I cannot stand it any longer. Fresh air, fresh air ! This workshop where one *manufactures an ideal*—it seems to me as if it reeks of lying and deceit.’

“—‘ No, one moment more ! You have told us nothing of the masterpiece of these necromancers, who know how to change black into white and innocence : Have you not noticed that which is their highest achievement, their most audacious, insane, artificial master-stroke ? Take care ! These worms, swollen with envy and hatred—what have they done with envy and hatred ? Have you heard these words proceed from their mouth ? Would you imagine, if you only listened to their discourses, that you are among men full of malignity ? ’

“—‘ I understand. I open my ears again (alas ! and hold my nose). Now I begin to understand the meaning of what they are always saying : “ We, the good, we are also the just ” ; what they claim is not their revenge, but the “ triumph of justice ” ;



what they loathe is not their enemy, oh no ! They loathe *iniquity*, *impiety* ; the faith which inspires them is not the hope of revenge, the intoxication of vengeance (“sweeter than honey,” used already Homer to call it), but the triumph of God, of the *just* God over the impious, and those whom they love in this world are not their brothers in hatred but their “brothers in love,” or, as they say, all the Good and the Just on earth.’

“—‘ And what do they call that fiction which consoles them for all their earthly sufferings—what do they call their phantasmagory of a future state of felicity, the advantages of which they discount in advance ? ’

“—‘ What ? Do I hear well ? They call it : “the last judgment” ; and the advent of their kingdom they call the advent of the “kingdom of God,”—*in the meantime*, they live “in faith,” “in love,” “in hope.” . . . ’

“ ‘ Enough ! Enough ! ’ ”<sup>1</sup>

Every natural conception falsified ; the moral values, good=strong=powerful=mighty=beautiful, inverted and turned into their diametrical opposite ; such is the result of Christianity. The slaves, the weaker race, conscious of their impotency and yet moved by that Will of Power which is the elementary condition of all life, desire to gain the upper hand. What other means, and what better means, than that of *inverting* all the moral values, of turning good into synonymous with weak and oppressed and ugly and cowardly ? But, in order to effect this transvaluation of all values, it was necessary that the assistance of the supernatural world should be called in. For, in order to vanquish the strong race,

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vii. 329-331.

strong means must be employed ; and as the slaves possess neither courage nor physical strength nor talent for organisation, they must employ *ruse*, cunning, and hypocrisy. In order to vanquish the strong race, it was necessary to render that race ill. Christianity has succeeded—there is no doubt about it—in this task. In order to obtain its victory, an enormous dose of hypocrisy was necessary. The whole invention of the supernatural world was hypocrisy. In order to render the qualities which distinguish the weaker race attractive, it was necessary to identify the suffering and the poor and the miserable with the “elect of God.” God himself, synonymous with the Will of Power in all its pride with the masters, became synonymous with the consciousness of impotency in the hands of the slaves. The lust of power became, in the mouth of these hypocrites, “the striving after the Kingdom of God.” Revenge, hatred, envy, malice became transformed into “love,” even of enemies, into “hatred of the evil and impious.” Cowardice became “patience,” and low obsequiousness became “humility,” and was elevated to the rank of a virtue ordained by God. The whole of this Christian atmosphere of lust, accompanied by consciousness of impotency and enveloped in a soft cloak of hypocrisy, is reflected in the New Testament, alike in its doctrines—“blessed are the meek,” “blessed are the pure in heart,” “blessed are the merciful,” “whosoever shall wish to enter the Kingdom of God, it is necessary for him that he should become as a little child”—and in the story of the Passion, with the lesson it conveys of swallowing every insult, every blow, every indignity, with “forbearance”—another name for cowardice—and ending with



that typical prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The founders of Christianity had shown proof of great skill. The cross with its bleeding victim was an admirable instrument for appealing to the "forgiveness" and "charity" of men—that is to say, for destroying all that which is hard and virile in human nature. Christianity was also favoured, and greatly favoured, by circumstances. The great Roman empire, type of all that which is strongest and greatest in man, was already torn by internal strife and dismembered by foreign invaders. The "barbarians" who invaded Europe, the "barbarians" from the steppes and from the plains and mountains of Asia—Huns, Vandals, Mongols—were indeed beautiful types of the primitive man, overflowing with force and exuberant life, but alas! not as the Greeks or the Romans, who combined the strength and vigour of the "man of prey" with the intellectual strength and vigour, so colossal as to be incomprehensible for us, which was incarnated in an Æschylus, in a Themistocles, in a Thucydides, in a Julius Cæsar, in a Marius. Matched against all the subterranean forces of *ruse*, cunning, hypocrisy, the beast of prey incarnated in the "blond German," superb in his indomitable will, in his power of destruction, but possessing no creative power, this beast of prey was fatally doomed to be vanquished. Christianity employed in this fight against the "barbarian" the best possible method. It rendered him ill. And yet how was it possible to cause the "barbarian" to be tormented by his conscience, how came the cross and its palpitating victim to find favour with these uncouth and savage races? Probably this astonishing phenomenon was due to weariness, and

due also, perhaps chiefly, to the absence of all creative power in the "barbarian," which robbed his power of destruction of that which is destruction's sweetest and noblest sanction, that of replacing what is destroyed by something still higher, still more beautiful. However, whatever the cause, the result is incontestable. Christianity rendered the "barbarian" sick. It gave him a conscience. It tamed him, reduced him to docility, by the vision of the cross.

It must be noted that Christianity admirably adapted its methods to the character of those whom it proposed to conquer. The cross, with its idea of human sacrifice and of the redemption by blood, is a heathen notion, borrowed without acknowledgment from the cult of Adonis and Dionysus, from an idea which anthropological research has shown to be common to all parts of the world, to be prevalent among the Aztecs of Mexico as among the Shilluks of the Soudan, among the cannibals of Fiji as among the Samorins of Malabar. The sight of the torn and bleeding victim would appeal to the "barbarians," even if they did not grasp the significance of the legend of pardon attached to it. As to the weapon which Christianity possesses in "conscience," its mechanism is at once simple and supremely well adapted to its end. The "barbarian," wild, uncouth, happy only in destruction, great in destruction, must have an object which he can destroy. How if, instead of destroying others, he should be set to destroy himself? The "conscience" is the best means to this end. Tormented by his conscience, instructed to probe himself to the bottom, haunted by the idea of sin and of damnation, the "barbarian" flagellates himself instead



of flagellating others. He is rendered ill, and the remedy which is proposed to him is one designed to aggravate that illness. He is rendered ill by the phantom of his conscience, and he tortures himself perpetually, he endures every suffering and mortification, in order to appease that conscience, which is the voice of the avenging God speaking to him and requiring satisfaction. The idea of conscience is what the French call "*une idée de maître.*" The weapon of conscience was the great weapon for rendering the healthy man ill, for aggravating the illness of those already unhealthy; by the poison of conscience was slowly, but surely, instilled into the strong man and the happy man the notion of the *sinfulness* of his strength and of his happiness. "Why should I be happy and strong and privileged, while others are miserable and weak and suffering?" whispers the insidious voice of conscience. As if the strong man, and the great man, and he who is blessed by an exuberant nature with abundance of wealth, both physical and mental, has not the right, has not the *duty*, to be happy and proud; and, contrariwise, has not the weakling, the invalid, the wreck of life, the *duty* to suffer from these defects, which render him an eyesore to the artist?

The whole edifice of Christianity rests on an imaginary conception of the world; and this is a condition necessary to its establishment and to its preservation. "In the Christian edifice, neither morality nor religion come on one single point into contact with reality. A mass of imaginary causes ('God,' 'Soul,' 'Ego,' 'Spirit,' 'Free Will'—or else the Will which is not free); a mass of imaginary effects ('sin,' 'redemption,' 'grace,' 'punishment,' 'forgiveness of sins'). Relations established

between imaginary beings ('God,' 'Spirits,' 'Souls'); an imaginary natural science (anthropocentric; entire ignorance of the concept of natural causes); an imaginary psychology (a mass of misunderstandings, interpretation of agreeable or disagreeable feelings, *e.g.* that condition known as 'nervus sympathicus,' with the help of the symbolic language of religious and moral idiosyncrasy, 'repentance,' 'remorse of conscience,' 'temptation of the devil,' the 'presence of God'); an imaginary teleology ('the Kingdom of God,' 'the last judgment,' 'eternal life')." <sup>1</sup> Christianity, which set itself the task of inverting nature, of inverting all the natural tables of values, had to base itself necessarily on an imaginary and anti-natural conception of the world. For what is the natural, the original, table of moral values? As we have seen, there are by nature two systems of morals, distinct from each other, opposed to each other. The masters, the ruling and strong race, have *their* values, and in this table good is synonymous with all those qualities which go to make up the character of the race. Good is synonymous with strong, with powerful, with brave, with violent—in a word, with *all that increases life's vitality*; and if immorality, if unscrupulous and ferocious egoism, if cruelty and suffering, increase the strength and vitality of life, the masters say "yes" to immorality; for life is that which "must always surmount itself," as Zarathustra preaches, and the only law of life is that which orders us to realise life in its plenitude, in its integrity, and the only limit to the assertion of life is the limit of our individual strength. To say to man, as Christianity does, as the moral law does,

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," viii. 231.



“ become thus and thus, do this and this, do not do the other thing,” in the name of some abstract and external entity, is an absurdity. Life, left to itself, asserts itself within the limits of its strength and leaves undone, not that which it ought to have done, but that which the law of its own preservation commands it imperiously to avoid.

The very essence of Christianity is *humility* ; and this atmosphere of what he took to be subservience, obsequiousness, lying, cowardice, is what caused the great outburst of Nietzsche against Christianity in his “ Antichrist.” And, indeed, can we imagine a Greek of the pre-Socratic era, a Pericles, an Æschylus, a Themistocles, a Sophocles, reciting the prayer of the Christian “ to be merciful unto us, miserable sinners ” ? Can we imagine an Over-Man, such as Napoleon, such as Julius Cæsar, such as Cesare Borgia, thus humbling himself in the dust ? The code of the masters says : “ Be hard,” “ Ask not for mercy and expect none ” ; the code of the Christian says : “ Forgive,” “ Be merciful.” Can we imagine a proud man of the race of the masters asking forgiveness ? He would not know what forgiveness was. Can we imagine him asking for mercy, asking for quarter—or giving quarter ? Nietzsche was such a man. As Professor Lichtenberger has remarked : “ Nietzsche was a classic born in a democratic age.” Nietzsche’s whole classical soul, his whole conception of life, the ideal he has formed in “ The Birth of Greek Tragedy ” of Greek life, of Greek philosophy, all contribute to make him look upon Christianity as something beneath him, as a religion for weak slaves who, too cowardly and too impotent to gain power otherwise, resorted to all the weapons of hypocrisy in

order to attain their ends. It was not the dogmas of Christian theology which he assailed, so much as the spirit of revenge and *rancune* which he supposed to lie at the bottom of Christianity.

Another nihilistic religion is the great Asiatic faith, that of the Buddha. But Nietzsche was careful to distinguish between the Asiatic and the European religion. Buddhism is essentially a religion for races which are older, more advanced, more aristocratic than the races of the West. Buddhism is a nihilistic religion for aristocratic races, Christianity a nihilistic religion for weak and degenerate ones. Buddhism is a religion for aristocratic races which have lost their strength, lost their love of life, a result due in great measure to the climate. It was, indeed, among the luxuriant tropical foliage of Ceylon that Buddhism originated. Buddhism represents, even in its nihilistic tendencies, the diametrical opposite of the "vulgar plebeianism" and impotent Will of Power which find their expression in Christianity. All the passions of hatred and envy which Nietzsche saw in Christianity, find no place in Buddhism. He attains in Asia the highest wisdom, who is above, far above, all the passions, good or bad, which agitate the human breast. The sage is he who has recognised the essential vanity of all things, who lives in communion with the Eternal, to whom good and bad, envy and hatred, are all alike unknown. The hygienic condition imposed by Buddhism on all its adepts is peace, the perfect peace which is undisturbed by any of those baser passions which inferior humanity may know and must know, but which the Brahmin disdains. Brahminism, Buddhism, remain always the religions of castes, essentially aristocratic, but the expression



of an aristocracy which is decayed, old, which is touching its term. Peace and serenity are the keynotes of Buddhism; the malignity and envy which know no peace are the dominant features of that slaves' rebellion which is concretised in Christianity. The Buddhist will not torture himself with his conscience; he aspires to the nirvana of absolute peace, where he is dead to the world around him. Christianity was a religion which had to conquer wild men and strong, and in order to conquer them it was first necessary to make them ill with the idea of conscience. Buddhism needed no such mechanism, as it had to deal with older races, with races whose temperament was quite different, moulded by a climate quite different.

The result of nineteen centuries of Christianity has been to make man ill and timid and afraid of himself as much as of others. With its ingenious mechanism of conscience, with its doctrine of pacificism and forgiveness, it has, on the one hand, made him ill, on the other hand destroyed all that was most virile in his nature. It has effectually sapped the virility of the stronger races, of the masters, by instilling into their mind the insidious mechanism of conscience, which has caused them to doubt of themselves. This is one of the master-strokes of Christianity; it has caused the stronger races to cease to believe in themselves. Its other master-stroke was the curbing of the passions of the masses by the same mechanism. For, while the "conscience" acted as a restraining power on the strong man, preventing him from manifesting his strength and from affirming his life as he would otherwise have done, it also prevents the weaker races from breaking wildly loose, as they do when this "conscience"

is temporarily removed, as in the French Jacquerie, or in the Peasants' War at the time of the Reformation, or more recently during the Paris Commune ; and this same conscience, preventing the instincts of one and the other from manifesting themselves externally, causes both to turn those instincts of destruction against themselves ; they perpetually torture themselves under the apprehension that it is their conscience which reproaches them. Thus Christianity, and its mechanism of conscience, is a great life-destroyer, both negatively and positively. But while, in one respect, its inhibitive influence on the personality of its adherents be productive of good, and be necessary to the stability of the social structure ; on the other hand, that influence is in the highest degree pernicious, in that it slays the stronger races, those which are humanity's justification and *raison-d'être*. Nietzsche expressly declares :

“ I have not declared war on the anæmic Christian ideal with the purpose of destroying it, but in order to put an end to its tyranny and to make room for new and more robust ideals. The continued existence of the Christian ideal is one of the things to be most sincerely desired, because of those other ideals which must exist side by side with it and perhaps vanquish it.”<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of this is that Christianity is necessary to the masses of humanity. It is the creation of those masses, and it responds to their anæmic and somewhat pitiable conception of life. For the masses a faith is necessary, a faith in a law external to, and higher than, humanity. Morality is necessary to the construction and continued maintenance of the

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” xv. 434.



social structure ; and the proof of this is that every sociologist has sought the justification of a moral law on sociological grounds. But what morality can equal, in the power of its sanction, that of the Christian faith, with nineteen centuries of tradition behind it ? Nietzsche recognised that nineteen centuries cannot be effaced in a day, and that indeed their effacement is not necessary nor desirable. Christianity is necessary, as Voltaire once put it, "in order to prevent our being assassinated by our servants, if we have any." It is a check, and a salutary check, on the evil instincts of the mass. But it is more. It is the great consoler of humanity. It is not science, even with a capital, which can pretend to have replaced religion as an explanation of the riddles of life. Placed face to face with these riddles of life and of death, the mass of humanity will always seek some explanation of them. Only the few, only the *élite* can afford to recognise the supreme vanity of all things, can be able to recognise that the only value of life, which is at the same time its supreme value, is life considered as a means for the creation of beauty, of ever greater beauty. Christianity brings to the masses a sweet illusion and a great consolation ; this alone renders it necessary. It responds to a fundamental need of humanity.

The continued existence of the Christian ideal is desirable in the interests of the superior races themselves ; and firstly because that ideal, as incarnated in the Catholic Church, represents the best means for asserting their own domination. It teaches the masses obedience, contentedness, meekness. And secondly because, in order to establish a new ideal, a more robust ideal, it is necessary that the ancient

one should still subsist, in order to engender its successor. "It seems to me always more and more," writes Nietzsche, "that the philosopher, as belonging necessarily to to-morrow and the day after, has always found himself in opposition with to-day, and must always so find himself; his enemy was always the ideal of to-day. Up till now, all these extraordinary benefactors of humanity whom we call philosophers—and who seldom felt themselves to be the friends of truth, and seemed rather to themselves to be knaves and perilous points of interrogation—all these, we say, found their task, their difficult, unwished-for, unavoidable task, but also their greatest and worthiest task, to be that of making themselves the Cassandras of their day. It was because they had the courage to vivisect boldly the virtues of their day, that they succeed in revealing what was their own greatest secret—the knowledge of a new possibility for mankind, of a new and untrodden path to hidden greatness."<sup>1</sup>

Christianity then, it may be said, is not an obstacle to the realisation of Nietzsche's ideal, but rather the contrary. This is an error. Certainly Christianity acts beneficially on the masses, both as a check and a consolation. As such, the effacement of nineteen centuries of culture is neither necessary nor desirable. But the *monopoly of Christianity* is an obstacle, and a very great obstacle, perhaps the greatest obstacle, to the realisation of Nietzsche's ideal. If Christianity has done and can still do useful work among the masses, it has proved the deadliest poison for those who are above the masses, for those superior men who are the salt of the earth and also humanity's justification. It must ever be remem-

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," vii. 162.



bered that Christianity is an invention of the lowest classes, that it represents the ideal of those classes, that it alone benefits those classes. But its action must be restrained to the sphere of those whose ideal it is. The slaves, the oppressed, the weak, the outcast, the mediocrities, can find satisfaction in Christianity. It is not the duty of the masters to deny them that satisfaction. But the masters have their own ideal, and an ideal which is diametrically and totally opposed to that of Christianity, and it is that ideal which Christianity has always combatted, and with success. The success of Christianity has meant the impoverishment of humanity. Henceforth its influence must be exerted there alone where that influence is legitimate. In other words, Christianity must be an instrument in the hands of a race of conquerors, of a strong and dominating race, to be exploited by this race for its own benefit ; and not, as it has been up till now, an instrument in the hands of an inferior race, to be used against the masters. If the interests of a certain class—the least interesting—of humanity demand the maintenance of the Christian ideal, the interests of all that is of value and of beauty in mankind demand imperiously that new ideals shall be opened out beside it and far above it.

## CHAPTER VI

### SCIENCE

CHRISTIANITY especially, and religion in general, is the greatest obstacle to the establishment of Nietzsche's ideal. The religious idea in general implies the subjection of man to a power which is foreign to his nature, to a law which is outside the domain of life. It implies therefore a restriction of man's liberty, it implies a limitation of his strength and energy ; and it implies further a diminution of the sole source of fertile and productive labour—namely, egoism ; for it seeks to withdraw man's admiration for himself and to centre it on an alleged higher Power. It teaches him to neglect himself and to sacrifice himself for others, without apparently perceiving the illogical character of an argument which is based on an impossibility ; for if each one were solely actuated by altruism, none would permit his neighbour to sacrifice himself for him ; and thus all sacrifice would be rendered impossible. Christianity, in particular, is the religion of the lowest classes of humanity, a creed invented by the slaves, the outcasts, the refuse of humanity, and reflecting the passions, mean and contemptible, of these classes. All those passions and sentiments which enrich and ennoble and beautify life, “ the *affirmative* sentiments, pride, joy, health, the love of the sexes, hatred and war, veneration, refined taste and manners, a strong will, the cultivation of a powerful intellect, the Will of Power,



thankfulness for the world and for life, everything that is rich and can *give*, everything that brightens and adorns and divinises life for eternity, the whole force of illuminating virtue," as Neitzsche writes,<sup>1</sup> all these are condemned and persecuted by Christianity.

But Christianity is to-day a vanishing and dwindling force. It is not Christianity which to-day moves the masses. It is not to Christianity that appeal is made by modern philosophy. English insularism and prejudice are still accustomed to vain attempts to reconcile the trend of modern ideas with Christianity. But the students of Oxford, "home of lost causes," and of Cambridge, living in an atmosphere of religious idealism, see life through a prism. Never has Oxford merited its historic name better than in its calm defiance of the progress of scientific research and free thought. While the great universities of the Continent have long since thrown to the winds the mantle of mysticism and religious inspiration, Oxford and Cambridge remain still where Butler was, and Paley, and other worthy defenders of the faith of the eighteenth century.

Outside England, however, Christianity can no longer be considered a force—if we except Spain. It is generally considered that the dogmas of the Church are irreconcilable with the facts revealed to us by science. The force of to-day, and certainly the force of to-morrow, is science. Alike in its practical and in its theoretical uses, science is the force which appeals irresistibly to modern humanity. The eye admires the gigantic ironclad or liner which traverses the Atlantic in five days, the express which carries the traveller from Paris to St Petersburg in less than sixty hours,

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xv. 485.

the tunnel constructed through the mountains, the bridge which spans the river or rapids, the electric lamp which carried on into the night the light of day. The thinker admires its skilful hypotheses, its minute and patient analysis, the vast syntheses with which it is credited, and wrongly credited. And perhaps another reason for this hold of science upon the humanity of to-day is that science is essentially a child of the nineteenth century, and of the latter half of the nineteenth century, and that its growth and development are in a sort contemporary of the growth and development of the living generation. When we see the astonishing progress made in every branch of science during the last fifty years, in mathematics, in astronomy, in physics, in chemistry, the various biological and psychological sciences, in sociology, we cease to wonder at the spectacle of science everywhere replacing the ancient religion as the moving force and guide of humanity.

But this new faith of humanity, this faith in science, is it a faith more favourable to the realisation of Nietzsche's ideal than the old faith? Does science favour the development of the only life which is worth living, of the life which is strong, and powerful, and exuberant, and rich in creative power? Does science help us to realise the only law of life—to live *wholly*? It is according as to whether science be an aid or an obstacle to the realisation of the great law of life, that it must be judged.

The verdict must be that science is an obstacle to its realisation, and an obstacle scarcely less great than Christianity itself. Let us look for a moment at the man of science. He is certainly anything but a great man. He is a good worker, a patient collector of details, an exemplary searcher after dusty archives



and old manuscripts. He passes his life in a laboratory, or in a library, always in the same atmosphere, surrounded by the same environment, busy on the same work, becoming ever more and more specialised, till at last his extreme specialisation becomes fossilisation. This eternal pursuit of the same object, this perpetual neglect of general culture, this ultra-specialisation, which are the features of the man of science, are eminently unfavourable to the development of the wide sympathies or varied tastes or virile instincts, which are the features of the great man. On the other hand, they are especially favourable to the growth of a narrow spirit, to the development of shortsightedness, of fanaticism, of ignorance of all reality outside that contained in the extremely narrow sphere of the scientist's specialisation. It will be objected that the extreme abundance of subject-matter obliges the scientist to make a specialisation of some particular branch of the vast tree of knowledge. This may be, and incontestably is, perfectly true ; but it demonstrates the limitations of scientific culture, and proves that this culture is in no way favourable to the development of life in its integrity, but very much the reverse.

“ Compared with a genius, that is to say with a being who *creates* and *conceives*, in the highest sense of both words, the learned man, the scientific mediocrity, is something of an old maid ; for, like the latter, he is unable to understand the two most valuable achievements of man. As a matter of fact, one recognises both of them, the scientist and the old maid, as highly respectable. Let us examine more closely : what sort of person is the scientific man ? First of all, an essentially democratic specimen of mankind, with all the virtues of such a democratic specimen, that

is to say of a man unable to command, incapable of exercising authority, incapable even of self-sufficiency. He is diligent, patient, orderly, moderate, always identical in his wants and in his capacities ; he has all the instincts of his race, and an instinctive desire for that which is necessary to men of his stamp—for instance, a modest independence and a green field, without which quiet, orderly work is impossible ; honours and distinctions ; the aureole of an honoured and respected name, which shall set the seal on his value and utility, the conscience of which must always serve to repress that secret lack of confidence which ever lurks in the heart of every dependent man, of every gregarious animal. The scientist has also the maladies and tares of an unaristocratic race : he is full of contemptible envy, and he has the eye of a lynx for detecting that which is base in the character of those to whose height he cannot attain.”<sup>1</sup>

And as for the philosophy which is taught by these narrow-minded scientists :

“ Science flourishes to-day and has an eminently good conscience ; while *that* to which the whole of our modern philosophy has sunk, those remains of modern philosophy, awaken nothing but suspicion and discouragement, if not ridicule and sympathy. Philosophy reduced to a ‘ theory of knowledge,’ as a matter of fact nothing but a miserable ‘ doctrine of fasting ’ (Enthaltsamkeitslehre), a philosophy unable to cross the threshold and which painfully declines even the privilege of entering—that is philosophy in its most recent expression, an end, an agony, something which excites sympathy. How could such a philosophy—rule ? ”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vii. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vii. 146.



The philosophy of modern science, in so far as we can call it philosophy, aims at the destruction of everything which is strong, of everything exceptional, of everything which is capable of dominating and menacing. It is essentially the "people's philosophy"—that is to say, a philosophy of social platitude and regression. Its dominant note is an aggressive materialism, whose motto is "Neither God nor master." Both on the Continent and in Great Britain is this untoward phenomenon to be observed. In France it is in the name of science that the work of levelling, of democratising, of destroying all that is noble or that aspires to domination, is being pushed forward. Up till 1870, Germany was the land of great idealism; the names of Goethe, of Kant, of Hegel, of Schopenhauer, in philosophy; of Beethoven and Wagner in music; show us what a nation inspired by great ideals can achieve. The intellectual culture of Germany during the latter half of the eighteenth and during the first half of the nineteenth centuries, was remarkable above all things for the vastness and power of its synthetic achievements. What has happened since 1870? Germany has become the land of intense industrial and commercial activity, the land of militarism and of individual servitude. Science has flourished in German universities during the last thirty years, certainly, and the figure of the German professor has become legendary. But this triumph of materialistic science has signified the cessation of all vast synthetic achievement, sacrificed to minute and painfully correct works of analysis; it has signified along with the ever-increasing power of commercialism the ever-growing democratisation of the empire, and the continuous abasement of the national spirit. Science has no reason to be proud of these results.

The essence of the scientist is cautiousness, patience, extreme and pedantic diligence, all of them qualities unknown, or almost unknown, to the genial spirit, to the really great mind. The learned man whom Zarathustra has among his disciples up on the mountains, and who has spent his whole life in minutely analysing the cerebral structure of the leech, is typical of his class. Take the physiologist or the microbiologist or the chemist in their laboratories, or the spectacled professor learned in ethics and moral science ; are these types of great men ? They are workers, and doubtless useful workers, doubtless indispensable workers, as their labours serve as material for the synthetic achievements of the creator, but they must not be confounded with this creator. They amass the material, each bringing his little stock well garnished, each having spent a lifetime in the examination of an infinitesimal fraction of the domain of knowledge ; but they are incapable of anything like a wide view, embracing horizons outside their own particular one ; they are incapable of understanding the meaning of the facts they collect. It is for the creator to utilise these facts, to utilise them in the construction of the vast syntheses, of the tables of moral and metaphysical values, which are as landmarks in the history of humanity. But precisely this modern philosophy, this philosophy of modern science, this materialistic philosophy which is so favourable to the intense development of commercialism and mercantilism, which regards the production of wealth as the end of life, which preaches the doctrine of the Rights of Man, which flatters the prejudices of the ignorant by talk about the sovereignty of the people ; this philosophy whose aim is the levelling and democratisation of everything, whose



dream is universal peace and platitude, whose ideal is mercantilism pushed to excess, whose means to the attainment of its end is the destruction of the *élite*, this philosophy renders impossible the construction of these landmarks, by seeking the annihilation of those who alone are capable of creating them.

Thus modern science, far from being an antithesis of Christianity, as it falsely pretends to be, is itself an emanation of Christianity. Like Christianity it seeks to promote "well-being," "happiness," "charity," "pacifism," and other conditions by means of which the superior and stronger races are weakened and destroyed. Like Christianity, it is democratic, it comes from and belongs to the people. If Christianity sets before its adherents an ideal which is nihilistic and anti-vital, modern science gives humanity an ideal which is, perhaps, even more ignoble—the ideal of wealth and material happiness as the justification and end of life. The results of this modern philosophy can be seen in the history of the last thirty years, in the three greatest nations of Europe, in France, in England, in Germany. Ever-growing democratisation, along with an ever-growing dearth of great thinkers and great men ; the lack of a robust ideal ; increasing industrial and commercial activity accompanied by increasing moral stagnation : such is the net result. Science is as little favourable to the development of a healthy, strong, courageous philosophy as ever was Christianity.





BOOK II  
POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY





## CHAPTER I

### THE WILL OF POWER AS FUNDAMENTAL POSTULATE

WE have contented ourselves up till now with a brief glance at Nietzsche's fundamental idea, the idea which underlies the whole of his philosophy, and with a review of the arguments put forward by him against the chief obstacles to the realisation of his ideal. We saw Nietzsche's ideal of life to be the *integral* life—that is to say, the life which manifests itself freely and without hindrance, the life which realises all the possibilities contained in it, the life which gives itself freely, which creates, and beautifies the world by its power of artistic creation. But there are many obstacles to the realisation of this ideal. The modern State, creation of the inferior classes of humanity, and designed exclusively to benefit these classes ; Christianity, the religion of the slaves and the outcasts, the greatest obstacle of all, from whose doctrines the very idea of the “*Rechtsstaat*” has been derived ; the moral law, which subjects man to a law which is nothing else but the expression of the passions and prejudices of a class, and which is nothing better than a diluted Christianity, a sort of hemiplegic Christianity ; finally science itself, by its glorification of the material to the detriment of the ideal, by the mediocrity of the culture which it offers, by the levelling and democratising influence which it exerts, is an enemy of the life in beauty, in plenitude, and in power which is Nietzsche's ideal.

The only law of life which we know, probably the only law of life which exists, certainly the only one we know, is the law which commands us imperatively to realise life in all its infinite possibilities, to manifest life in all its integrity, to live *wholly*. This being the only law of life, everything which exists must be judged according to this law. That which tends to increase our vitality and to strengthen and beautify life, is alone "good." There is no such thing as "good in itself"; a thing is good or bad according as to whether, at a given moment, it is profitable or unprofitable to life. If immorality and cruelty and falsehood are, for instance, favourable to the development of life, to the extension of its power; and if, contrariwise, morality and sympathy and truth are prejudicial to vital development and extension; then the law of life commands us to say "yes" to immorality and cruelty and falsehood, and "no" to morality and sympathy and truth.

But the law of life which commands us to realise life to the utmost of its possibilities is also the law of the whole of nature, whether organic or inorganic. Everything which is, tends to persist and to develop. This is the universal law, inherent to the whole order of things. But in the domain of both inorganic and organic life, this tendency of the various forces in presence is subject to restriction. Space and nourishment are limited, and reduced, for the higher scale of living being, to very narrow limits. In consequence, there is a struggle for existence. Every creature tends to persist and to develop, but only those whose condition is best adapted to exterior conditions—in a word, those that are *fittest*—survive.

Such is the theory of natural selection which Darwin first applied to the solution of the problem :



how do variations of species arise? This theory starts from the point, which it takes for granted in a sense *a priori*, that the law of all life is the *tendency to persist and to develop*. But, given the conditions under which alone life is possible and which restrict the number of those who can find place to live, only the fittest can survive. Those who adapt themselves best to their environment will persist at the expense of those who fail to adapt themselves as well. In a word, the better-conditioned—that is to say, the *strongest*—persist at the expense of the less well-conditioned—that is to say, of the *weaker*.

Such is the great biological law. Translated into other terms, we may thus define the biological law: the Will of Power as the elementary expression of Life.

For what do we witness in the operations of the biological law? We witness a certain number of forces at work. Existence being the fact *a priori*, we see these forces striving to maintain themselves—that is to say, striving to *act*—within the limits of existence. But the action of these forces is not reciprocal; it is antagonistic. Action is the condition of the persistence of these forces, and the greater the action the stronger the persistence. We witness the elimination of those forces whose action is weaker and less developed. Now it may be said that each of these antagonistic forces is moved by a *will* to act, and by a *will of power*, as each strives, by a more powerful action, to neutralise the action of the antagonist forces. The tendency to persist is a tendency to assert oneself, to increase one's power, as the very fact of a tendency to persist existing, a tendency to *action*, a *will of action*, is implied; and a will of action cannot be other than a *will of power*,

as the aim of action is maintenance, persistence, development—that is to say, Power.

Now let us apply this concept of the Will of Power not merely to the world of organic and inorganic nature, but also to the ideological world, to the world of our ideas and concepts. What do we witness in the ideological world? We witness also a number of forces at work, each striving to persist—that is to say, each of them acting, and acting in view of their maintenance, persistence and development—that is to say, in view of their power. In other words, each force of the ideological world—each idea, therefore—is actuated, just as the forces of biological nature, by a *will of power*. The forces of the ideological world, however, are not actuated by a Will of Power inherent to them. The world of ideas has no existence in itself, independent of us. The Will of Power manifested consequently in the ideological world is but the expression of a power which exists as *reflection* in the ideological world, and which is inherent only in us.

The Will of Power is that which is fundamental in the world. It is the elementary fact, which we must accept as being, in a sense, *a priori*. As origin and beginning we can see only one thing—Force. A number of forces stand in presence, and the history of the world is a history of the action of these forces—in other words, of the manifestations of the Will of Power. The central idea and fundamental postulate of Nietzsche is this: *there is no force superior to force*. And this is no tautology. Up till now we have always imagined, or tried to imagine—or at least all the religions and philosophies since the time of Socrates have tried to imagine—that there is something superior to force—namely, the idea. The religions



called this latter God, the philosophers gave it different names, and under those different names it is always recognisable as the moral law. This is precisely what Nietzsche calls in question when he proclaims that "there is no force superior to force." Everything which is, tends to persist. Natural selection determines the persistence of those types which adapt themselves the best to their conditions of life. The play of natural selection begins already within the atom, among the electrones or corpuscles which compose it.<sup>1</sup> Everywhere we can see nothing but the reign of force, the action of one force producing a second force or eliminating a third force. The universal law is : struggle for existence, survival of the fittest. The fittest are the *best*—that is to say, the most adapted to the conditions of their environment at a given moment—that is to say, the strongest with regard to a certain set of conditions. But the signification of the word "fittest" is purely relative. Change the conditions and the fittest of yesterday may be the least fit of to-day. Instability would thus appear to be the characteristic of the law of life. The words "fittest" and "best" must be always understood in reference to a given set of conditions which determine what is fittest and best at a given moment.

Thus everywhere the law of life is the same : tendency to persist. Life everywhere and under all its forms, whether in the atom or in the vertebrate or in the idea which is the projection of the laws of the human understanding, tends to manifest itself, to develop itself in all its plenitude, to realise the *maximum* of life. The tendency is universal ; but the possibility of realising that tendency is limited, owing

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Professor Darwin's Presidential Address to the British Association, at the meeting of 1905, at Capetown.

to the conditions of existence, which permit only of its realisation by the *strongest*—that is to say, those who are best adapted to those conditions of existence. It is *force* which is victorious over the less strong. Life, in its universal tendency to persist, always seeks those means for realising its aim which are best suited to that realisation. Every condition which favours the development of life, consequently the realisation of the law of life, is good. Thus the standard by which all things must be judged is their *utility to life at a given moment and in given conditions*.

Darwin was the first to apply the fruitful principle of natural selection to the world of organic nature. It has since been applied with conspicuous success to the domain of inorganic nature, and we have been shown its action on the struggle for existence between the component elements of the atom. But scientists as well as metaphysicians have always taken for granted the existence of certain laws of nature, immutable and eternal, to the operation of which the whole cosmological process is subject.

Nietzsche has pushed the theory of natural selection and of the survival of the fittest further on into the domain of the ideological world, and by those means he has endeavoured to strike at the very roots of all scientific belief. Science regards the world, life, humanity, as the manifestation of a force certainly, but of a cosmic force, eternal and immutable, independent of humanity. The cosmic force, the world-substance, takes on different forms, and the idea is but a particular emanation of a particular combination of the cosmic force with a specified and highly specialised condition of matter. The individual is, indeed, a manifestation of the cosmic process, of the



world-substance ; but he has conscience of the whole of which he forms a part, through the medium of certain universal laws, of which the law of causality is the most important.

Nietzsche has inverted the position adopted by all thinkers up till the present day. For him, it is not the individual who is a manifestation of the world-substance, but the alleged world-substance is but an emanation of the individual, a projection of the laws of his intelligence through space and time.

But this position is no novelty, it will be urged. Innumerable are the philosophers who have pushed scepticism to a denial of the reality of the outer world. Berkeley certainly preceded Nietzsche on this ground, and Hegel and Fichte and Schopenhauer, to mention only the most celebrated. All these thinkers, however important the divergencies between them on other points, were agreed in placing the centre of things in the human mind, in making the world the representation of that mind, the reflection of its intelligence. Nietzsche is far from being an innovator on the ground of subjectivism.

This is perfectly true. And, more especially, the theory of Schopenhauer of the world as will and representation has been extensively utilised by Nietzsche. But where Nietzsche did certainly innovate, where he unquestionably did effect a reform in the history of philosophy, as M. de Gaultier has pointed out, was with his conception of "no force superior to force."<sup>1</sup> For every thinker antecedent to Nietzsche has admitted the law of causality and the mathematical axioms, for instance. Every thinker antecedent to Nietzsche has admitted the existence

<sup>1</sup> Jules de Gaultier : "Nietzsche et la Réforme Philosophique." (Paris, au *Mercur de France*, 1904).

of certain immutable laws of nature, by virtue of which we ourselves exist and without which we should not exist. Berkeley, who denied us the right of arguing from phenomena to noumena; Schopenhauer, for whom the world exists only as the mirror of ourselves, as our representation--both admitted certain fundamental laws of nature, by virtue of which we are able to *reason*. It has always been held that only in virtue of certain immutable laws of nature do we exist, only in virtue of these laws can we *know* and *perceive* and *reason*.

In particular the notions of space and time have always been regarded as given *a priori*, as having an existence in themselves, as necessary to all knowledge. According to Kant, space is not an empirical concept, for in order to perceive something as material it is necessary to refer our sensations to something external to us; therefore the representation of space exists previously to those objects which we project into space. Experience is possible only by the representation of space, and cannot give birth to the notion of space. Time is likewise an intuition *a priori*, condition of succession and change.

Humanity has, during a certain period of its intellectual evolution, always striven after a form of reality distinct from reality itself. This effort attains its most vehement expression in the domain of ideology, and translates itself into the pretended discovery of a "thing in itself" behind the phenomenal world, of a transcendental moral law, and of a transcendental æsthetic law (employed in the usual sense of the word "æsthetic," and not as Kant employs it). The idealistic school have denied the validity of the phenomenal world, only to affirm the reality of the noumenal world. The materialist



school have rejected the noumenal world, only to affirm the reality of phenomena. Every theory of knowledge is based on the assumption that knowledge has a value *in itself*, that certain laws of knowledge are immutable, such as those of causality in space and of succession in time. Thus Kant affirms that the "transcendental idealism of the concept of space finds its counterpart in its empirical reality."<sup>1</sup>

The history of philosophy since Plato, according to Nietzsche, has been the history of an error. This error has consisted in separating the idea from that which gave it birth, from the *Force* which engendered it. The idea, separated from its cause, has been set up as a cause, whereas it is in reality a resultant. Thus Plato's "pure spirit" erected into an independent entity; thus Kant's faculty of forming synthetic judgments *a priori*; thus Schelling's "intellectual intuition"; thus Schopenhauer's principle of practical reason. Thus also the assumption of causality, of space and time, as conditions *a priori* of experience; thus the assumption of certain mathematical postulates as axiomatic truths. It has not been seen that all these supposed faculties of the mind, these principles of reasoning, these laws of logic, are but expressions of a force antecedent and superior to them, and which has created them.

What are in reality these ideas which humanity has grown to consider as *a priori* conditions of all knowledge, as given, as undisputed truths in themselves? For instance the ideas of space and time and causality, which have been admitted by all philosophers as conditions precedent, as given, and given as the conditions of existence, and given

<sup>1</sup> "Kritik der reinen Vernunft" (ed. Hartenstein), p. 69.

just as existence itself is given. These ideas are but the expressions of a force which has created them. Humanity, finding itself in certain conditions of existence, required knowledge as a necessary means of persisting, of maintaining itself. The ideas of causality, of space and time, are ideas which, under the actual conditions of existence, prove most beneficial to humanity as a means of acquiring knowledge, consequently as a means to maintaining itself in the struggle for life. These ideas have no reality whatsoever in themselves ; they represent the truth for humanity under certain conditions, and the truth is an instrument in the struggle for existence, and, should perchance the actual conditions of existence change, the truth of to-day would no longer be the truth of to-morrow, and the concepts which we regard as conditioning life to-day would perhaps have to be inverted to-morrow. In a sense, we may regard the ideas of causality, of space and time, as *a priori* conditions of existence ; but only as regards the *actual conditions* of existence. These ideas have no reality in themselves ; in the beginning it is possible that many concepts of reality were in presence ; and if the concepts which we regard to-day as immutable, those of causality, of space and time, have *survived*, it is because these concepts are the best adapted to the conditions of existence, it is because they are necessary to existence, in the sense that, knowledge being an essential condition of the maintenance of the species in the struggle for life, and these concepts giving that knowledge which is best adapted to its maintenance, these concepts may be regarded as *indispensable instruments for the preservation of the life of the species*.



Thus the idea of the struggle for life, applied with such success by Darwin to the world of organic life, and extended since his time to the world of inorganic nature, is applied by Nietzsche to the domain of abstract knowledge. If an idea be regarded as true, and be regarded as true by the universal consent of mankind, as is the case with the ideas of space, time and causality, it is not because that idea possesses any reality in itself; there is but one reality of which we have conscience, and that reality is Force, of which the law of life is an expression; it is because that idea is necessary to the existence of the species under given conditions. But we may very well conceive of a species placed under different conditions of existence, and to whom our concepts of knowledge, such as the ideas of causality, of space and time, would be unknown. The ideological world is a "table of values"; its contents are not entities in themselves, but represent each a certain "value" to humanity in the struggle for existence. The error of philosophers has consisted in neglecting the fundamental concepts of knowledge as factors in the struggle for life, and in considering them only *in themselves*.

In placing ourselves at this point of view, the controversy as to the validity of these fundamental concepts disappears. As to whether the ideas of space and time and causality have empirical reality, we can answer: no. The sole reality of the entities of the ideological world consists in their greater or less *utility* for humanity. The foundations of knowledge possess thus merely a utilitarian value. Truth is not an entity superior to humanity, exterior to humanity, immutable and independent. Truth is synonymous with what is useful for the maintenance

of the species. Truth is an instrument in the struggle for existence ; that which the species finds to be best adapted to its preservation, that is " truth " to the species. And that which is best adaptable to certain conditions, consequently that which represents " truth " under certain conditions, may become untruth and falsehood under other vital conditions. When Nietzsche says that he will prefer falsehood to truth should falsehood be proved to have greater value to life, he is speaking of the metaphysical fiction of truth, which represents it as fixed and immutable, and which, under the form of the moral law, is the concrete expression of the prejudices of a particular class. The metaphysical transvaluation of all the natural values has made truth into an independent and immutable entity ; whereas the natural evaluation of truth shows truth to be merely synonymous with that which is most useful to the life of the race under certain conditions.

The eternal pursuit of the various philosophic schools after truth resembles the efforts of the alchemists to convert every metal into gold. Like the alchemists, the philosophers are pursuing a chimera which has no existence. Once we apply the theory of natural selection and of the survival of the fittest to the domain of abstract knowledge ; once we recognise the fact that the ideological world is but the expression of that force which manifests itself in the law of life itself ; we shall recognise also the fact that truth is something necessarily relative, necessarily non-existent as an expression of the absolute. The world of ideas is the expression of a force which causes everything that is, to persist. It is the *Will of Power* of a race which, tending to persist in the struggle for life, selects for the assertion



of its power those weapons best adapted to the conditions of the struggle. The concepts of space and time and causality are true because they give us that knowledge which best adapts itself to our situation. Without knowledge we could not exist as a species ; but our knowledge is not true in itself, it is not knowledge in itself, it is perhaps a perpetual illusion and a dupery ; but that illusion has proved to be indispensable to us. However, let us not think that knowledge, as applied to humanity, signifies anything but a force in the struggle for existence, a force which is useful for the maintenance of the species.

It is in the domain of abstract reasoning that Nietzsche's position startles us as if it were some gigantic paradox. Truth is abolished as an entity in itself, and those most fundamental concepts on which our whole theory of knowledge is based, the notions of causality, of space, of time. We are living, perhaps, in a vast illusion, at all events in a world which has no existence of which we have any knowledge, for our knowledge is but a form of adaptation to our environment. But how, it may well be objected, can under these circumstances our environment be an illusion ? Given the fact of our environment, our adaptation to it under the form of knowledge surely shows that our knowledge is not mere dupery.

Turning to the domain of morals, Nietzsche has attacked, and most brilliantly attacked, that idea of an independent moral law which Kant has termed " *Das Gute an sich*." As a matter of fact, the moral law, in the history of philosophy, seems to have originated with Socrates and Plato, both of whom Nietzsche has rightly recognised as precursors of

Christianity.<sup>1</sup> What is this moral law which triumphed with Christianity, which triumphed with the Kantian philosophy, with the French Revolution, which triumphs to-day with modern ideas? The moral law is but a symbol of the Will of Power, of a force which has become idealised, in order that, by means of its identification with the world of alleged noumena, its value as a means of affirming the power of those who invented it, as a means of combat, may be enhanced. In the world of morals, as in the world of knowledge, the metaphysical idea of truth is the purest fiction. Truth is, in morals as in knowledge, merely a means to an end; and the end is the *affirmation* of a certain race, of a certain type, of a certain species. We will come later to Nietzsche's theory of the two systems of morals—that of the masters, and that of the slaves. It suffices to say here that, according to Nietzsche, the masters, or superior and eugenic races, regard as moral everything that we to-day, under the reign of the supremacy of the inferior races, regard as immoral. For the masters, good is synonymous with strength and power and beauty and courage, ruthless, unscrupulous, ferocious. The slaves, unable to combat the masters with their own weapons, adopted the moral law as their instrument in the struggle for supremacy. With Christianity the inferior races triumphed, and immediately a transvaluation of the ancient values, those of the masters, was effected. The qualities of the inferior races, weakness,

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche has made a violent attack on Socrates in the "Götzendämmerung," in which he describes him as "belonging by birth to the lowest class of the people, to the rabble," and throws doubts on the genuineness of his Greek origin ("Werke," viii. 68-75).



cowardice, *ruse*, patience, were elevated to the rank of virtues, and baptised with new names (love, charity, forgiveness, meekness), and identified with an alleged eternal and higher state of things, which are not of this world but above it. In this way, the inferior race assured a greater stability to its triumph. Identified with the world of noumena, or of supernature, the moral law, instrument of combat, was less liable to be called in question. The origin of the moral law as an expression of the Will of Power of an inferior race, struggling for supremacy, is thus overlooked.

In the domain of knowledge as in the domain of morals—and also in that of art—there is no such entity as a “thing in itself.” Everything must be measured with regard to its utility for the human species at a given moment and in certain conditions. That which we call truth is but an instrument of combat, it is synonymous with that which assures the supremacy of a race or of a species. Reality there is none other than the Will of Power, of which the law of life is the manifestation, and which is synonymous with the force that causes everything which is, to persist in being. It is in obedience to that force that we select those instruments best adapted to the realisation of that tendency. Those instruments we call “true,” but they are only instruments in the service of the Universal Force, neither immutable nor eternal, but changing according as the conditions of existence themselves change.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AS EXPRESSION OF THE WILL OF POWER

WE have seen that Nietzsche applies rigorously the theory of natural selection to the domain of ideology. Our knowledge is not knowledge in itself, but the expression of an adaptation to a certain environment. That which we know, or think we know, is a purely subjective creation ; or rather it is not even subjective, for the " subject " is itself a resultant ; we have no knowledge of subject or object ; since we have no knowledge at all in the exact sense of the word. That which we call knowledge is simply that which is useful to the life of the species, which aids the species in persisting ; it is a manifestation of the Will of Power of that species. As such it possesses neither immutability nor a value in itself apart from those conditions under which it is created by the species. As Dr Rudolf Eisler writes :

" The forms of our thought-process, according to Nietzsche, do not reflect in any way the reality of things, but only serve to co-ordinate the chaotic elements of our experience. Far from reproducing the conditions of reality, they tend rather to falsify the content of our experience. *The categories of the understanding are nothing but the humanisation of our experience* ("Vermenschlichungen der Erfahrung"). They do not proceed from experience, are not caused or motivated by experience, and are not inborn concepts reposing on supernatural knowledge. On the contrary, they are produced in and through experience, they are caused



by psycho-physical shortcomings, by the weakness of our organs of sense, of our memory, of our language. Fantasy is the real origin of the categories. Having thus been produced, they become fixed by selection and heredity, become universally valid, and in this sense, in their relation to every individual experience, they become *a priori*. As conditions of the maintenance of life they are also conditions of all 'knowledge.' They form a series of acquired errors, suitable to the persistence of species; the world which they postulate is not experienced; however, once one knows the history of the origin of the categories, there is no sense in supposing them to possess any validity as expressions of Reality." <sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche has himself written :

"The categories are 'truths' in that sense only, that they are conditions of life for us: just as the Euclidian space is such a conditional 'truth.' In a word: as no one will sustain the necessity of the existence of a human species, so is our reason, just like the space of Euclid, a mere idiosyncrasy of certain species, one amongst many." <sup>2</sup>

Truth is thus a necessary illusion, if one may use the expression, without which a given species of living beings could not persist, could not maintain life. The value of that illusion as a condition for the maintenance of life determines its value as an element of knowledge. According as to whether it possesses a positive or a negative value it will be classed as true or untrue. Where philosophers have committed an error, and a very serious error, is in their non-recognition of this origin of all those concepts of knowledge

<sup>1</sup> R. Eisler: "Nietzsches Erkenntnistheorie und Metaphysik," p. 21 (Leipzig, 1902).

<sup>2</sup> "Werke," xv. 278.

which we are accustomed to consider as fundamental. They have given those concepts an independent existence, and have overlooked the fact that they represent nothing more than a means to an end—that they are a symbol of the Will of Power which manifests itself in the law of life and which, pushing every living being to persist in being, pushes it also to select those weapons for its defence which are best adapted to that purpose. Knowledge is an instrument of combat. The fact of certain ideas, such as those of space and time and causality, being accepted as universally valid, merely proves the supreme value of these concepts as a means of maintaining and developing life, nothing more.

The categorical imperative which commands us to search after truth must be able to justify itself as a means of maintaining the life of the species, as an expression of the Will of Power. Our passion for Beauty is likewise an expression of the Will of Power—of the will of *creation*. The “thing in itself” and “beauty in itself” reduce themselves to the same fundamental Will of Power. Why do we desire to *know* reality? What is the secret of this thirst after knowledge which is everywhere manifested? Because knowledge is a means of gaining power, of subjecting the world to our power. That world alone is comprehensible for us which is our own creation.

“Knowledge acts as the instrument of power. It follows therefore that knowledge increases according as our power increases. What is the meaning of knowledge? Here, as in the case of the moral values ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ is the idea to be taken in a strictly biological sense. In order that a given species may persist and develop its power, it must calculate its conception of reality in such a way as to be able to



construct by means of this conception a plan of existence. The usefulness of knowledge—not some abstract theoretical desire not to be deceived—is the real motive which underlies the development of the organs of knowledge ; these develop themselves in such a way that, by observing the results obtained by them, we are able to maintain ourselves in existence. In other words, a quantity of knowledge depends upon the degree in which the Will of Power of a species develops itself ; a species conceives a certain quality and quantity of Reality, in order to become master of that reality, in order to press that reality into its service. . . .

“ There is neither ‘ Spirit,’ nor Reason, nor thought, nor consciousness, nor soul, nor will, nor truth ; all these are useless fictions. There is no question of subject or object, there is only question of a given species, which can persist only if it possesses a relatively right idea of things. Especially is a relative regularity of its perceptions necessary.” <sup>1</sup>

Here we must note again that the words “ will ” and “ truth ” are to be read in their metaphysical sense—as “ free will ” and as an eternal and immutable truth external to humanity and superior to it.

Thus the most widely believed “ truths ”—such as the law of causality for instance, which philosophers have wrongly considered as being *a priori* to all experience—are for Nietzsche nothing better than concepts which must be accepted for the present, until new conditions of life favour the rise of new concepts, adaptable to those new conditions. This belief in certain alleged universal truths is a belief without which the existence of the species would in all probability be menaced. But the truth, immutable and

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” xv. 275.

eternal, of these concepts is not proved by this *necessity* of believing in them ; for such truth is not dependent on the mere existence of humanity. The two qualities which Kant recognised as constituting the criterion of the truth of a proposition—*i.e.* its universality and its necessity—merely demonstrate that such a proposition is “ true ” in the sense of being necessary to the persistence of the species under certain conditions. But such a proposition does not quit the region of belief ; and it is a belief conditioned by circumstances independent of it.

The position of Nietzsche is clear. The only reality of which we can have any knowledge, and we can have knowledge of it only because we are ourselves emanations of this reality, is force. We witness an innumerable quantity of forces in presence, each force antagonistic to the other, each striving to persist at the expense of the other, the stronger and fittest persisting at the expense of the weaker and less fit. Life is but the manifestation of this Universal Force, and the law of life is the realisation of the *maximum* of life. We witness the struggle for existence, struggle of species against species, struggle of each species against the brute forces of nature. The Will of Power, inherent in each type, and which is the law of life, the Will of Power which pushes every species to seek to acquire greater power, every individual to seek to acquire greater power—that Will it is which is expressed in the whole world of ideas : in the theory of knowledge, which is the instrument of our preservation in a chaos which we know not, and of which we can only render ourselves the masters on conditions that we co-ordinate its elements, which is synonymous with subordinating them ; in the theory of morals, which are the expression of a particular race of men



at a particular time, striving after power. Placed in a chaos which would otherwise submerge us, the imperative necessity of our maintenance orders us to co-ordinate the elements of this chaos, to harmonise them, to *know* them, so that we may subordinate them and press them into our service. But were the conditions other than they are, so would our efforts to co-ordinate and subordinate the elements of our surroundings be other than they are, and would express themselves in a theory of knowledge adapted to the changed conditions. But are we justified in arguing that, because our ideas of space and time and causality and succession, etc., have been formed as means of adaptation to an environment, therefore those ideas must reflect the reality of that environment? Nietzsche replies in the negative. What is alone real is the Will of Power, everywhere active under manifold forms, but one in substance, and which manifests itself in life, and in the law inherent to life of realising the maximum of vital strength.

“That between subject and object a sort of adequate relation exists; that the object is something which, seen as an internal perception, would be as the subject; this is a good-natured legend which has done its time. The measure of all things known to us is the raw necessity of cognition. How can we, from this standpoint, attribute to subject or object predicates at all in conformity with Reality?”<sup>1</sup>

“The affirmation: ‘I believe that this and this be true,’ as condition of truth:—in every such estimation is expressed a condition of maintenance and development. All our senses and organs of knowledge are evolved with a view to the maintenance and development of the species. The belief in Reason and

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” xv. 273.

in its categories, in dialectic, in the value of logic, proves only the *usefulness* which experience has shown these to possess for the persistence of life, not in any way their 'truth.'

"That a quantity of *belief* must exist ; that judgments are necessary ; that no doubt exists with regard to all important concepts :—this is a condition necessary for all life ; consequently, it is essential *that something should be believed to be true—not that something really is true.*" <sup>1</sup>

Questions as to the substance or form of the "thing in itself," considered independently of the receptivity of the senses or of the activity of the understanding, must be brushed aside with the further question : How can we know that a "thing" exists ? The world of "things" is our invention. Many other species may very probably have many differently conceived worlds of "things," equally "true" for them, because as necessary to their maintenance, and development as ours is to us. Nietzsche poses the question "as to whether our faculty for creating, logicising, co-ordinating, falsifying be not itself the best guaranteed Reality. In a word, *if that which supposes the existence of 'things'* be not alone real ? And if the 'effect of the outer world on us' be not also the resultant of the subjective will ? . . . Other beings react on us ; our made-up world of illusions is a co-ordination and subordination of their action, a sort of weapon of defence." <sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche differs from his master, Schopenhauer, in that the former suppresses everything which is not pure Becoming, whereas the latter's Will is essentially Being. Beyond the world of phenomena, Nietzsche leaves nothing. There is no reality distinct from

<sup>1</sup> Werke, xv. 273-274.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xv. 280-281.



phenomena, and the world of truth itself, as an entity apart, does not exist.

“ How the world of truth became at last a fable. The history of an error.

“ i. The world of truth, attainable by the wise, the pious, the virtuous—the virtuous man lives in the world of truth, he *is* the world of truth.

[Most ancient form of the Idea, relatively clever, simple, convincing. Another rendering of the proposition : “ I, Plato, am the truth.”]

“ ii. The world of truth, unattainable at present, but promised to the wise, the pious, the virtuous—to the sinner that repents.

[Progress of the Idea ; it becomes more vaporous, less difficult to seize hold of—it becomes *female*, Christian. . . .]

“ iii. The world of truth, unattainable, [unproveable, not promised, but a thought which brings comfort ; a duty, an imperative.

[The erstwhile sunshine appears, but veiled in fog and scepticism ; the Idea become sublime, pale, northerly, Königsbergian.]

“ iv. The world of truth—unattainable ? At all events unattained. And also unknown. Consequently neither comforting nor imperative : how could something unknown act as an imperative ?

[Gray morning. First yawn of Reason. Cockcrow of Positivism.]

“ v. The world of truth—an Idea which is quite useless, which binds us to nothing—an unnecessary, superfluous Idea, consequently a *refuted* Idea : let us abolish it !

[Broad daylight ; breakfast ; return of “ bon sens ” and merriment ; Plato blushes ; great jubilancy of all free thinkers.]

“ vi. We have suppressed the world of truth : what world remains ? The world of illusions, perhaps ? But no ! *Together with the world of truth, we have suppressed also the world of illusions !*

[Midday ; moment of the shortest darkness ; end of the longest error ; summit of humanity ; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.] ” <sup>1</sup>

This is the great secret which Zarathustra comes to preach to mankind. Zarathustra is a sceptic, and pushes scepticism to the length of ceasing to believe that he believes, thus :

“ In the domain of science it is said, and rightly said, conviction finds no place. Only when science resolves to content itself with a modest hypothesis, with an experimental ‘ for the present ’ standpoint, then only can it be allowed to take place within the realm of knowledge. . . . Does this not mean, in other words, that first *when conviction ceases to be conviction*, can it find a place as an element of knowledge ? ” <sup>2</sup>

Belief in the objective reality of truth as an entity superior to humanity, and disassociated from its conception as a means to the maintenance and development of the species under given conditions, as an emanation of the Will of Power of a species, such a belief is purely metaphysical. “ There can be no doubt about it, the believer in truth, the man who is truthful in the sense of believing in science, affirms through that belief his faith in the existence of a world other than the world of Nature, of Life, of History ; and in so far as he affirms the existence of this ‘ other ’ world, must he not in the same measure *deny* its counterpart, which is this world of ours ? One

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” viii. 82, 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 272.



understands what I mean—namely, that our belief in science is a metaphysical belief—that we, too, the learned men of to-day, we atheists and anti-metaphysicians, we also light our fire with that same brand which has kindled the flames of beliefs thousands of years old, which ignited the torch of the Christian faith, which was also the faith of Plato, the belief that God is true and that truth is divine.”<sup>1</sup>

Science, which claims to have reversed the old faiths, which is supposed to be the antithesis of metaphysical thought, is in reality profoundly metaphysical. If the world is abandoning its beliefs in the dogmas of Christianity, that essential belief which constitutes the kernel of Christianity, as it constitutes the kernel of every religion and of every philosophy—the belief in truth as an immutable essence, above the world of phenomena and abstracted from the conditions of the struggle for existence, remains also the heritage of modern science.

“The negativists of to-day, those who demand most uncompromisingly the severest intellectual probity, these hardened, strong, heroic intellects which are the honour of our time, all these pale atheists, antichristians, immoralists, nihilists . . . these last idealists of knowledge in whom alone lives to-day the spirit of intellectual conscientiousness—they believe themselves to be as far removed as possible from any ascetic ideal, these free, very free, thinkers; and yet . . . this ideal is precisely *their* ideal. . . . They are *not* free thinkers, *for they still believe in truth*. When the Christian Crusaders fell in with that invincible Order of the Assassins, with that order of free thinkers *par excellence*, whose

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” v. 275.

inferior members lived in an obedience such as no monastic order has ever known, they obtained, I know not how, some information with regard to the famous symbol, with regard to that essential principle of the order, the knowledge of which was exclusively reserved for the superior dignitaries, sole depositaries of this ultimate secret: '*Nothing is true, everything is allowed.*' Well, that was freedom of thought, a freedom which allowed of the belief in truth itself being negated." <sup>1</sup>

This symbol of the Order of the Assassins, Nietzsche has made it his own. For him, as we have seen, truth is but the expression of the Will of Power, everywhere active, manifesting itself in life, requiring all life to endeavour to realise the maximum of vitality within it. Truth is but an instrument for the realisation of this end. It is true, all that which embellishes and strengthens life and adds to its creative power. If we find that immorality is more useful to life than morality; or should we find some other categories of the understanding more useful to life than those of substance and cause, of unity and plurality; or should we discover that our concepts of space and time do not respond in an adequate measure to our Will of Power, to our desire to increase our power by subordinating the chaotic elements of our environment to us: then we should have to prefer immorality, to create new categories, and new concepts of knowledge. And precisely the *creation of new values* is the noblest task of the creator, of the Over-Man whose advent Zarathustra has come to preach. Life is a vast field of experiments for the creator; it exists solely as a means for affording the creator of values scope for his activity; the creator is life's justification; and the task of the

<sup>1</sup> Werke, v. 468-469.



creator is to render life ever more beautiful, ever more fertile, ever more powerful. To attain this end, destruction is as necessary as creation. For the old values, those values which represent the work of an inferior element, and which hinder the progress of life, which sap its vitality by seeking to destroy the only real sources of that vitality—these old values must be destroyed before the new ones can be revealed. Zarathustra has come as a great destroyer as well as a great creator.

It may be asked whether Nietzsche has not, by the extreme scepticism which he displays in the domain of abstract theoretical reasoning, himself destroyed his own position. By admitting that our categories of the understanding, and also the fundamental concepts of space and time, are “true” for us in so far as they represent the best means of preserving the life of the species in the struggle for existence, he has admitted their truth in the only case in which these concepts or the categories interest us. Existence being given, and certain conditions being given, it ensues that the natural tendency of every living being to persist, will translate itself in the forging of those instruments best adapted to that ultimate purpose. The world of truth which should exist outside this world of ours, as an entity apart, would not have the slightest interest for us. It is evident that for us the only truth which counts, is that which adapts us to our environment and so increases our power and our vitality. But is it any less the “truth” because of this? Does not the fact that certain concepts—such as those of space and time—are universally accepted, prove that there does exist some adequate relation between our theory of knowledge and Reality? Granted that Nietzsche’s proposition be correct, that

our concepts of reality and the categories of the understanding have been formed because these concepts and these categories are the best means of subordinating our environment to us, of increasing our Will of Power—does the fact that the origin of those concepts and categories is to be found in the struggle for existence in any sense invalidate them? Quite the contrary. The fact that certain concepts possess a universally recognised validity shows these concepts to be true—true for us, in our present conditions of existence, and that is sufficient. Speculation as to what may be the concepts formed by other species, in other conditions of existence, or as to what might be ours were our conditions of existence changed, is an unfruitful labour.

And even Nietzsche himself is compelled to admit the existence of a “truth,” which is the Will of Power. We may suppress the world of noumena and of phenomena, we may even suppress the “ego,” and argue, as does Nietzsche, that already the supposition of a subject is “etwas Hinzuerdichtetes”; but we cannot suppress the *fact* of existence itself. That primordial fact we are obliged to accept as truth. The various conditions of existence and our knowledge of them may be, and very likely are, as Nietzsche says, “Annahmen bis auf Weiteres.” But so far, at any rate, our knowledge of them, limited and very greatly limited as it is, is true in its fundamental postulates. How would it be possible to imagine our being able to subordinate the chaotic elements of our environment without knowledge of those elements? Nietzsche admits that it is precisely in view of such subordination that we have forged the instruments of our knowledge, invented our concepts of space and time, imagined the categories of the understanding.



But how, if our knowledge of the elements of our environment were the opposite of Reality, if our conception of Reality were radically false—how could we, with such a false conception, subordinate these elements, render ourselves masters of that Reality? Nietzsche's argument results in an impasse. He does not endeavour to escape from it. Nietzsche never tries to escape from the consequences of his arguments, for he is too proud, too brave, and also too loyal, to do so. So he boldly proclaims that "it is essential that something should be believed to be true—not that something is really true." But what is the meaning of this proposition? Why is it essential that A should be believed to be true? Because A is necessary to our existence, replies Nietzsche. But if A be not really true—that is to say, if A be not an adequate expression of some definite relation between ourselves and reality—how can A be necessary to our existence?

If Nietzsche had defended his position on the ground that the fact that we have knowledge of certain elements which stand in adequate relationship between ourselves and the reality of which we form a part, does not give us the right to argue as to the nature either of these elements or of Reality itself: there is nothing to urge against this position, which is the Agnostic position pushed to its logical consequences. As to the nature of life and the world, we are as far advanced to-day as we were before the era of nineteenth-century science. What we desire to make clear, is that Nietzsche's definition of truth as a manifestation of the Will of Power, and as an instrument in the struggle for existence, does not invalidate in any way the idea of truth. Our sense organs have their origin also as instruments in the

struggle for existence, and yet retain all their value for the species. In the same way, our concepts of space and time, by the mere fact of their being necessary to life, are true for us, and have their value for us. Nietzsche proclaims that a conviction must cease to be a conviction before it can enter the domain of knowledge, and yet he admits that "without certain convictions the species would be annihilated," which is exact. He thus arrives at a contradiction with himself.

To sum up : Nietzsche's fundamental idea, that our concepts of knowledge, and the categories of the understanding, are empirical in their origin, and take their rise as instruments of the Will of Power of the species in the struggle for existence, is exact, to our mind ; and we certainly think it far more rational than Kant's theory of the origin of the categories. But where we think Nietzsche wrong is in his attempt to deny that our ideas of space and time, and other fundamental concepts of knowledge, in so far as they are means adapted to establishing a relative equilibrium between ourselves and our environment, furnish us with a true representation of that environment. Certainly, we fully concur that the representation thus afforded us of Reality is an inadequate representation ; it is far from embracing the totality of the conditions of Reality ; but the representation given us is sufficient for our maintenance as a species ; it permits us to subordinate to our ends a sufficient number of the elements of Reality to enable us to persist ; and, in so far, our representation must be taken to embody an expression of the relation of Reality to ourselves which is adequate to our existence, and which is consequently *true*.

Nietzsche's contention that "nothing is true"



may be met with the remark that the mere assertion of "nothing being true" must necessarily be based on the belief in a truth—namely, the truth that nothing is true. Truth is synonymous with "Zweckmässigkeit," with utility as a means of attaining an end, that end being the maintenance of a species. We think Nietzsche's proposition quite justifiable in itself. That which benefits the existence of the species is necessarily "true" for that species. But when Nietzsche reproaches the "learned atheists and anti-metaphysicians of to-day" with a "metaphysical belief in truth," he fails to see that this belief he necessarily entertains himself also when he formulates the proposition: truth is an instrument in the struggle for life. This proposition is based on a belief in its truth. The fact is that no proposition can be enunciated without a belief in its truth, without seeking to base it on truth. Truth may be, and is, an instrument in the struggle for existence. But is it any the less "truth" for this reason? Nietzsche declares that "truth is synonymous with 'Zweckmässigkeit,' " (appropriateness) and thinks thereby to have abolished truth; and he does not perceive that he is claiming this very proposition which he formulates, to be justified as—true!

But there is an objection which Professor Rittelmeyer has made against Nietzsche's theory of knowledge which we think based on a misunderstanding. Professor Rittelmeyer writes:

"Nietzsche informs us in the psychological exposition of his position, that that is 'true' which assures the most intense feeling of power and safety. But just as there are ideas whose antithesis would give us a much greater sense of security and power, and which are nevertheless held to be true; so does an idea lose its

capacity to communicate a sense of security and power in that very moment when it ceases to be considered as true. Nietzsche has here inverted the logical succession of psychological procedure. It is not because an idea communicates to us a sense of security and power that it is held to be true, but because such an idea is considered true it gives—under certain circumstances—a sense of force and safety.”<sup>1</sup>

It would be interesting to know what ideas they are “whose antithesis would give us a much greater sense of security and power, and which are nevertheless held to be true.” When Professor Rittelmeyer writes “that an idea loses its capacity to communicate a sense of security and power in that very moment when it ceases to be considered as true,” so is he but expressing the same idea as Nietzsche. An idea loses its capacity as an idea when it ceases to be considered as true; as “untrue” it has no longer any value for the species; and precisely because it has no further value in the struggle for existence it has become untrue. It is not Nietzsche but Professor Rittelmeyer, who has inverted the logical sequence of psychological procedure. The conception of a species deliberately holding ideas which are antagonistic to its existence is an impossible one. Such a species would not survive. Our fundamental concepts of knowledge have been evolved in the course of our gradual adaptation to our environment, and represent a relative equilibrium between us and the outer world; this equilibrium could not possibly exist were our ideas of the outer world false and opposed to all reality. Professor Rittelmeyer falls here into the

<sup>1</sup> F. Rittelmeyer: “Friedrich Nietzsche und das Erkenntnisproblem,” p. 96 (Leipzig, 1903).



same error as Nietzsche, only the critic has magnified the error. Nietzsche, while declining to recognise the legitimacy of arguing from our concepts of Reality to the truth of these concepts, recognised—not very logically, it would seem—that these concepts are a means of adding to humanity strength and power, that they are an indispensable instrument for the maintenance of the species. Professor Rittelmeyer, on the other hand, seems to recognise the possibility of these concepts being antagonistic to the development of the species in strength and power. But he fails to explain to us why, if the antithesis of certain ideas would give us a greater sense of security and power than those ideas themselves—why, under these circumstances, these ideas have come to be considered as true.

Nietzsche, as the philosopher of the theory of knowledge, has endeavoured to reconcile both Schopenhauer, on the one hand, and modern biological science, on the other. Nietzsche's "Wille zur Macht" is another expression for Schopenhauer's "Wille zum Leben." But on two essential points Nietzsche differs from the Frankfurt master. He has recognised a *complexity* in the world of our internal sensations which Schopenhauer failed to recognise. "Let us," wrote Schopenhauer, "reduce the concept of force to the concept of Will; it is, in reality, reducing something unknown to something infinitely better known—what do I say? To the only thing which we know immediately and absolutely."<sup>1</sup> But Nietzsche, in a brilliant analysis of the Will, has shown it to be something infinitely complex, something which we are far from knowing with anything like precision.<sup>2</sup> In the second place,

<sup>1</sup> "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung," i. 116.

<sup>2</sup> "Werke," vii. 28, 29.

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Nietzsche, unlike Schopenhauer, suppresses everything which is not pure Becoming; and by his inclusion of the world of ideas within the sphere of the struggle for existence, by the parallel which he establishes between the scheme of survival in the ideological world and that in the biological world, he differs from his predecessor.

Nietzsche has carried the conception of natural selection and the survival of the fittest further than any other theorician of knowledge, and Nietzsche's theory of knowledge is based on all its points on biological science. The empiricism of the materialist school he has carried to an extreme scepticism. But precisely in this scepticism lies the difference which separates him, in the domain of the theory of knowledge, from the materialist school. For Nietzsche, in spite of certain contradictions, is essentially a subjectivist. His penetrating analysis of the concept of Object, his insistence on the relativity of all knowledge, the fundamental importance which he attributes to the subjective factors in the domain of knowledge, constitute a great advantage over the doctrine which places the only reality in the outer world, of which the prodigious activity of our cerebral structure is but in a sense the reflection.

In this combination of voluntarism and empiricism lies Nietzsche's value as a philosopher of the theory of knowledge. His conception of the ideological world as subjected to the same laws of tendency to persist and survival of the fittest as the biological world, is an essentially fertile conception. It is one in entire harmony with his whole philosophic doctrine, which reduces life and all its manifestations to emanations of the primordial Will of Power. But it is in fertile *aperçus* and in brilliant flashes of



intuition that Nietzsche's theory of knowledge is rich, rather than in sustained argument and systematic exposition. Systematic exposition was what Nietzsche detested the most of all things ; his theory of knowledge, like his theory of morals, and his sociological ideas, are so many expressions of his personality—of a man who is at once a genius and a lover of paradox, fond of exaggeration, brave, loyal, aggressive, prepared to follow his thought wherever it might lead him. We have said that it is in his combination of voluntarism and empiricism that Nietzsche's value in the history of the theory of knowledge lies ; it is for those who come after him to develop his thought ; and if that thought is to be developed with advantage, it must be on the lines of such a combination.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MORAL SYSTEMS—MASTERS AND SLAVES

EVEN as the Will of Power manifests itself in the domain of abstract theoretical ideas, so does it manifest itself also in the domain of practical ideology. Just as our theory of knowledge represents an instrument in the struggle for existence, an instrument for maintaining the species and increasing its power, so do the various systems of morals in presence represent the tendencies of various races struggling both for existence and supremacy. For there is no such thing as repose ; everything is in a process of Becoming, and that which remains stationary perishes. The condition of existence is progress ; immovableness or regression entails decay. Humanity must increase in strength and beauty—which is strength under another form—or humanity will not survive.

As a matter of fact the systems of morals in presence are reducible to two : the system of morals emanating from the masters, from the superior races ; and the system emanating from the slaves, from the inferior races. For the war of classes, in which the materialist school of historians see the cardinal factor in history, Nietzsche has substituted the war of the races. The history of the human race, according to Nietzsche, has been the history of the perpetual struggle for existence and supremacy between the masters, or the strong races, and the slaves, or the weak races. The former—brave, strong, daring,



ferocious, unscrupulous—possess the advantage of overwhelming physical force ; they are also intelligent, but their intelligence is in harmony with their physique. They conceive vast syntheses, create new tables of values, are bold and daring and brave *in rebus psychologibus*, just as they are bold and daring and brave on the field of battle. They like to tackle the deepest and most dangerous problems, on the solution of which the existence of humanity may depend ; they are lovers of psychological nudity, to use Nietzsche's admirable phrase, who probe to the bottom of all things, who take a pleasure in laying sacrilegious hands on all those beliefs most sacred to mankind. The values which they create reflect their character. Good is synonymous for them with brave, with hard, with daring, with intrepidity, with refinement of taste and culture. On the other hand, the weak and inferior races, the " slaves " as Nietzsche contemptuously calls them, are physically weak, timid and degenerate. They are naturally obedient, obsequious, fearful of that which is superior to them. Their intellectual qualities can often be of a very high order—witness Kant, witness Socrates. But the intelligence of the slaves reflects also their physique. We find the theorists and philosophers of these inferior races essentially timid in their speculations ; we find them obsessed by the idea of the moral law, which is purely a creation of the slaves and the oppressed, and which is designed to protect them against the aggressions of the masters. Unable to defend themselves by physical force, these oppressed races have to have recourse to the imaginary protection of an all-powerful Being called God. The moral law is invented as an instrument of combat, as an instrument for subduing the ruling races, physically

invincible. The slaves employ an ideological weapon, since they possess none other. The moral law is the reflection of the character of the slaves, and represents their conception of life as opposed to that of the masters. The characteristics of cowardice, timidity, obsequiousness—which are the marks of the slaves—are elevated in the moral law to the rank of virtues, and become love of one's enemies, obedience to God, meekness of heart. The covetousness, envy, hatred, malice, uncharitableness of these degenerate beings, thirsting after power and yet terrified by their masters, break forth in the moral law. Christianity is the great victory of the slaves and the inferior races. These triumphed thanks to two factors: firstly, a decay of the superior races brought on by various concomitant causes; secondly, thanks to the moral law embodied in the Christian religion.

“In the course of a journey through the many more or less refined and more or less uncultured systems of morals which have formerly prevailed, or prevail actually on earth, I discovered several traits always recurring regularly and bound up one with another, until at last two fundamental types presented themselves to my eyes with a fundamental difference between them. There are systems of morals belonging to the masters, and systems belonging to the slaves.”<sup>1</sup>

The essential difference between these two systems of morals is due to the racial difference of the two types with whom they originated. The “race of the masters” is but another name for the eugenic race, anthropologically superior to the brachycephalous or mesaticephalous types. The characteristics of this race—bravery, love of danger for its own sake,

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” vii. 239.



hardness, enduring, intrepidity, boldness, love of conquest and adventure—all these characteristics are to be found in the morals of the race, which, viewed from the modern standpoint, from the standpoint of modern ideas corrupted by Christianity, by science, by the “practical reason” of philosophers, is a profoundly immoral race. The characteristics of the slaves, on the other hand, are faithfully reflected in that system of morals which raises sympathy, love, humility, charity to the rank of virtues. The two systems of morals are diametrically opposed to each other.

The aristocratic ideal finds its expression in the Greek culture of the age of Pericles, in the great Roman civilisation, in those grand types of humanity which the Renaissance produced, in Napoleon. “Culture and refinement ; the greatness of the soul which is great by reason of its abundant wealth, which gives not in order to receive, which does not seek to elevate itself by reason of its *goodness* ; extravagance as type of true virtue, great *wealth of personality* as its condition.”<sup>1</sup> Such is the type of the aristocrat, of the master, of the Over-Man, whose motto, which is one of Nietzsche’s most admirable mottoes, is, “Live dangerously.”

But the ideal of the Over-Man is not an ideal for the many. It is given only to the few, to the very few, to be “masters of creation and destruction.” The Over-Man is the warrior whose duty and mission it is to set an *ideal* before humanity, to create for humanity a table of values which shall give a value to life. And in order to do this, the Over-Man must know life under all its many aspects, he must know it as evil as well as good. For him, life is as a vast

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” xv. 455.

laboratory ; and, just as only the trained chemist or the trained biologist is fit to experiment in a chemical or biological laboratory, so is the Over-Man the only one to whom the destinies of mankind can safely be confided.

It is necessary for humanity that it should have an ideal ; and that ideal can be created only through suffering and hardship. " Every elevation of the human type has, until now, been the work of an aristocratic society—and thus will it always be—the work of a society which believes in the necessity of a hierarchy of rank and values, and which has slavery necessary under some form or another . . . Certainly one must not conceive any humanitarian illusions concerning the origin of an aristocratic society (consequently concerning the origin of every elevation of the human type). Truth is hard. Let us avow without fear the manner in which every higher culture has originated. Men whose nature was still natural, barbarians in the most terrible sense of the word, human beasts of prey, in possession still of unbroken Will Power and lusts, flung themselves on weaker, more moral, more peaceful races, which were perhaps industrial or agricultural ; or else on old, decaying civilisations, in which the last gleams of life still shone forth in a brilliant glow of mingled intellect and corruption. The aristocratic caste was in the beginning always the barbaric caste. Its strength lay as much in its spiritual as in its physical capacities—its members were the *most complete* individuals." <sup>1</sup>

Every great thing in the history of humanity has been the work, not of humanity itself, but of an *élite*, of an aristocratic *élite* above humanity. Every invention which ministers to our comfort,

<sup>1</sup> " Werke," vii. 235-236.



every discovery which adds to our stock of knowledge, every creation which adds to our table of values, we may trace back to some single name. Our modern science is the creation of Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus and Pythagoras, of Copernicus, Keppler, Newton, Bruno and Gutemberg ; of Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, Pasteur, Virchow, Koch and Curie. The religions of the West are associated with the genius of a Mahomet, of a Paul, of a Calvin. The names of Æschylus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, Wagner, represent so many glories of humanity—glories which are above humanity and which justify humanity. It is the mass of humanity which is justified by the existence of the Over-Man, who *creates* new values and thus adds to the power of the race. It is just and it is necessary that humanity should also be made to suffer for the Over-Man, since without the latter, creator of the values which justify humanity's existence, and set an ideal before the world, humanity would not even be justified. This is precisely what the moral system of the masters recognised. It recognised that every elevation of the human race was due to the action of an *élite* ; that the *élite*, composed of creators, must be hard towards itself and towards others. For the creator is hard, and without hardness he cannot create ; and, if he cannot create, what becomes of humanity ?

For some time past, however—indeed during the nineteen Christian centuries—every effort has been made to suppress the superior races and their ideal. For the superior races are, it must be recognised, a veritable scourge for humanity. But this scourge is good, this scourge is necessary, if humanity is to be rendered more beautiful, if its power is to be increased. It is by the scourge that humanity is to

be kept up to the mark ; the creator who moulds the destinies of the race for thousands of years, as if they were wax, can do so only provided he be hard, provided he be able to scourge without mercy, to purify by fire and sword, Humanity is the great ground whereon the creator of values may operate.

The anthropologically inferior races, however, moved by that same Will of Power which pushes everything that is, to persist and assert itself, have, since the advent of Christianity, gained the upper hand and succeeded in almost eliminating the superior race and its aristocratic ideal. The inferior races are physiologically weak and degenerate ; their intellectual capacity, as we have said, is sometimes of a very high order, but reflects their physiological nature. Their triumph is due to various concomitant causes—the neglect by the superior races of biological laws entering into play at least as much as the patience, *ruse* and refined trickery of their adversaries. Christianity has been the greatest instrument in the victory of the slaves. Christianity had to deal with an epoch peculiarly suited to the propagation of its doctrines. The Roman Empire was fast decaying. While the governing races were wasting their strength and their opportunities in frivolous amusement, the lower classes were sunk in deepest degradation. The ideals of the past—ideals which had produced a Marius, a Julius Cæsar, a Brutus—were gone, and no new ideals had replaced them. Incompetence and imbecility now reigned where strength and power and farsightedness had reigned before. Amidst this heap of ruins, material and moral, with the masses thirsting after vengeance and filled with the lust of conquest, Christianity was bound to flourish. On the other hand, Christianity



had to deal with young races, barbaric and beautiful in their uncontrolled Will of Power, in their exuberant force, but, as we say, young and lacking backbone. The conversion of the Germanic races, of the race of Hermann and Thusnelda, to Christianity, is one of the most remarkable events of history. Christianity conquered these wild and uncouth races by instilling into them the deadly poison of "conscience" and "sin." The exuberant vitality of the barbarian, unable to manifest itself at the expense of others, manifested itself at the expense of himself. Christianity admirably adapted its weapons to the peoples it sought to conquer, just as to this day the Catholic Church adapts itself to each individual country in which it takes root. The idea of sacrifice by blood, of the immolation of a victim, subsequently devoured by the worshippers, and deprived of its meaning as a symbol of redemption—which symbol would at first be incomprehensible to barbarians—such an idea would appeal to the instincts of cruelty and savagery of these wild barbaric peoples.

The ideal of the slaves triumphed with Christianity as it has triumphed with all "modern ideas." Equality, liberty, democracy are in the air. Modern ideas have triumphed in the modern State, as they have triumphed in modern science. Especially is the cult of science a democratic, an essentially democratic, idea. The religion of science, of which we hear so much, appears at once a religion based on the belief in Truth, like all religions; and a utilitarian religion which ministers to the comfort of all, and on the progress of which is based the hope that everybody may some day possess "seven acres and a cow." The erudite bookworm, the true representative of science, is the diametrical opposite of the genius, of

the creator, of the really great man. The age of decline in the history of a people is the age of the supremacy of the savant, as opposed to the synthetic philosopher who *creates* and beautifies life. To-day the savant is revered. It is the result of scientific progress, and is a sign, one of many, of the degeneracy which characterises the whole fabric of modern civilisation.

For the modern man is afflicted with degeneracy, with a profound degeneracy, a degeneracy manifesting itself in all modern ideas. There seems to be an end to the creative genius of the human race, an end to the life in beauty, in force, in power ; such as the Greeks and the Romans had manifested. The man of great passions, of deadly passions, the adventurer who sails boldly along unknown seas, amidst all sorts of hidden perils, in search of unknown lands, this man is to-day looked askance at, nay, persecuted and reviled. There is a general *belittlement* of the race in progress. The aim of the modern State, of modern science, of everything modern, is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the most vile ideal ever presented to man. As if happiness, or peace of mind, or placid self-satisfaction could constitute an ideal ! What is needed is the establishment of a new ideal, which shall revive that waning vitality which bids fair to vanish altogether in a short time. And that ideal can only be established through war and bloodshed and suffering and tears, for only by these means can humanity be awakened from its insensate dream of peace and placidity, only by these means can a robust, healthy, vigorous race—a race of *commanders*—be formed.

“ The disease of the Will prevails all over Europe, but in unequal distribution ; it manifests itself most



acutely in those countries where culture has been longest introduced ; and it disappears in the measure that the ‘ barbarian,’ smothered under the pitiable coating of Western education, succeeds in enforcing his rights. In modern France we see the disease in its most acute form. . . . The strength to *will* something is somewhat stronger in Germany, stronger in northern than in central Germany ; much stronger in England, Spain and Corsica, here connected with phlegma, there with a hard skull ; not to speak of Italy, which is too young to know what it wants, and which has still to prove that it can *will* what it wants. But the strength of Will is strongest of all and most astonishing of all in that immense Middle Empire, where Europe joins Asia, in Russia—there the strength of Will has long been prevented from manifesting itself, there waits the Will, uncertain as to whether it will be affirmative or negative—it waits, menacing, until its explosion. . . . Probably it will not be Indian wars or complications in Asia which will be necessary to relieve Europe of its greatest danger, but rather internal revolution, the splitting of the Empire into particles, and especially the introduction of that roaring cataract of nonsense known as Parliamentaryism, including the duty of everyone to read his newspaper at breakfast-time. I do not prophesy this as a friend of the revolution. It is the diametrical opposite which would appeal sooner to my heart—I mean such an increase of the Russian danger, that Europe be at length forced to become dangerous herself, that Europe be at length forced to *develop a will* in the person of a new governing caste ; a strong, terribly enduring will, capable of creating for itself aims to be realised a thousand years hence.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vii. 154 ff.

Unfortunately Nietzsche's wish does not seem to be destined to fulfil itself. It is a combination of Far Eastern complications and internal revolution which have, for the present at any rate, destroyed the "Russian danger."

To-day the evaluations of the slaves, of the inferior races, are everywhere triumphant. The democratic movement, and its consequences, socialism and anarchism, are the logical result of this victory. All men are proclaimed equal, in defiance of all biological law. The aim of life is no longer the creation of a race of Over-Men, but the giving of happiness—of a small, flat, uninteresting happiness—to everyone. The value of life has been reduced to a question of pounds, shillings and pence. Suffering is to be abolished, in accordance with the absurd sentimentalism of to-day which results from a degenerate physique, and which is but another name for abject cowardice. The happiness of the greater number and the happiness of the smaller number, of the *élite*, are two absolutely opposed states. The happiness of the greater number signifies a happiness of mediocrity; no desire for adventure, instinctive dislike of danger, hatred of anything approaching to hard work, calm, quiet, a well-ordered, methodical life, with sufficient to eat and drink, a newspaper every morning and a bit of green country in the summer. Such is the ideal of the democracy. And that ideal has been enforced to such an extent that the strong men of to-day, supposing such men to exist in this age of mediocrity, are killed by the atmosphere of their environment. The strong, the rich, are rendered ashamed of their strength and riches. The venom of "sympathy" poisons them, that sympathy which destroys the happiness of the strong without



relieving the weak of any of their abject hideousness.

The sole chance for the strong man of to-day, who wishes to preserve his dignity and courage and independence, is solitude. "Flee, my friend, into thy solitude," counsels Zarathustra. "I see thee deafened by the noise of their great men and stung by the stings of their smaller ones. . . .

"The people have little understanding for the really great, for that which creates. But it has understanding for all the players and actors of great things.

"The world revolves around the creators of new values ; it revolves invisibly. But the people and the glory revolve around the comedians. Thus 'goes the world.' " <sup>1</sup>

See one result of this great democratic movement—the growth of demagoguery and the evolution of the professional politician who trades on the credulity of the imbecile, credulity to which universal suffrage gives a prime. See the results of this democratic progress in France—the France of former days, of chivalry and heroism and great faith, the France which produced Napoleon, become the France of the third Republic, of Panama, of the Jews. See Germany, what has become of that idealism of which the land of Gretchen was once so proud ? What is the result of the "empire" founded on universal suffrage and parliamentarianism and concession to the masses ? The result has been a degeneracy of the German intellect. And some of the most brilliant pages of Nietzsche are those which he devotes to a scathing criticism of the modern German mind, a mixture of absurd nationalism and contemptible obsequiousness.

For Nietzsche is no patriot. The Over-Man

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," vi. 73.

necessarily considers patriotism as appertaining to the arsenal of worn-out superstitions, like the various religions. Nietzsche is a "good European," as he himself expresses it. He joins, on the common ground of internationalism, all those free minds and independent thinkers who, like him, are outside the pale of modernity. But he is nothing less than an internationalist after the socialist pattern. On the contrary, if one thing could justify the "policy of little States and national exclusivism," as he calls it, it is war. He predicts for the twentieth century an era of great wars, the most terrible which mankind has witnessed in modern times. And, to judge by the actual state of Europe, Nietzsche's prophecy appears not unlikely to be realised. But the result of these wars will be the establishment precisely of that new governing caste, which Nietzsche looks up to as the only possible saviour of humanity. Such a governing caste, composed of men habituated to command and to rule, will give Europe a new aim and a new ideal, which will be far above the petty aims and ideals of present-day nationalism.

The whole doctrine of the masters is contained in the proposition that "Humanity, as a mass, sacrificed for the benefit of a single race of *strong men*, that is what would constitute a progress." Humanity exists for the benefit of the superior race, of the *élite*, and this is a doctrine which Nietzsche did not invent, and which was also the doctrine of Ernest Renan and of Gustave Flaubert. All the sufferings, all the miseries of humanity are necessary, are justified, in order to permit of the "Dialogues Philosophiques" or "La Tentation de Saint-Antoine" or the poem of Zarathustra being handed down to posterity. And what does Nietzsche mean by a race of strong men?



As we have seen, he means by "strong man" the most *complete* man—the man of great physical strength and intrepidity, the man of dangerous passions, the man of instinctive refinement and delicacy even in psychological matters, the man who, capable of great passions, is capable also of governing himself. The theories of Nietzsche on the question of races and their anthropological merits are those of the Comte de Gobineau and of the modern anthropo-sociological school, of which Professor Ammon in Germany, and M. Vacher de Lapouge in France, are the most eminent representatives. "In the whole of Europe," writes Nietzsche, "the inferior race has now triumphed, in regard alike to their colour, to their brachycephalous features, and perhaps even in regard to their intellectual and social instincts. . . . The race of the masters and conquerors is decaying even in a physiological sense."<sup>1</sup>

The modern man is ill, and his illness is due to his degeneracy. The inferior races, naturally weak, puny, thirsting for vengeance on those who trample on them, and yet unable to gratify their lust except by tortuous means—these races are possessed of brutal passions and vile instincts which they are unable to repress by their own force. This is why the religions have been invented, alike as a comfort for the misbegotten types of humanity and as a means of rendering social life among these inferior races possible. Thus the priest plays a rôle of essential importance. The priest himself belongs to the inferior race, he is himself a degenerate in mind and body, but he possesses an unrivalled knowledge of the weaknesses and failings of those amongst whom he works and lives. The invention of "conscience" and of the

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vii. 418.

notion of sin are priestly inventions, and admirably adapted to the end in view. Thanks to these notions, the evil instincts of the slaves are not prevented from breaking loose, but they are perverted in their direction ; instead of being directed against others, these instincts are directed against self.

What is to be feared, and very greatly feared, under the present régime of democracy and liberty and equality, is that those lucky exceptions of humanity, those who have remained strong and powerful and healthy, should be subjected to a process of auto-suppression by means of the religion of sympathy and human suffering now in vogue, and which reflects exactly the degeneracy of virile instinct and manly sentiment which characterises our modern civilisation. " The more illness <sup>1</sup> spreads among the human race—and we cannot deny the spread of the epidemic—the more greatly should we honour those rare exceptions of bodily and mental power realised by the lucky specimens of the race, the more carefully should we preserve these healthy and strong exceptions from that worst of all atmospheres—the atmosphere of the invalid. Is this at present the case ? The invalids present the greatest danger for those that are healthy ; *not* the strongest are the cause of the bad luck of the strong, but the *weakest* are the cause of their misfortunes. Is this recognised ? In general it is not the sentiment of the *fear of man* which one would like to see diminished in intensity ; for this consciousness of the fear they inspire compels the strong to remain strong and to become, when occasion requires it, terrible—this sentiment is the means of maintaining the healthy type of man. That which should

<sup>1</sup> Illness must be taken here as synonymous with physiological degeneracy.



terrify us, that which is more fatal than any other fatality, is not the sentiment of fear, but the sentiment of great *disgust* of man and of great *sympathy* for man. Suppose these two sentiments to be combined one day, and inevitably the most disastrous of calamities must ensue—namely, the ‘last will’ of man, the Will of the Nirvana, nihilism. . . . All these are men of resentment, these physiological monstrosities, a whole kingdom shivering with the hidden desire of vengeance, insatiable and inexhaustible in outbreaks of fury against the lucky ones and in masquerades of revenge, in pretexts for revenge ; when would these attain the final, the most sublime triumph which their thirst for vengeance longs for ? Incontestably on the day that they succeed in burdening the conscience of the lucky ones with their own miseries, with the miseries of the whole world, so that the strong and powerful begin to feel ashamed of their luck and to say perhaps one to another : ‘ It is a crime to be so happy ! For there is too much misery around us ! ’ But no greater or more fatal misfortune could happen than if the strong and powerful and healthy in mind and body should begin to doubt of their *right to be happy*. Away with this misbegotten world ! Away with this scandalous feminising of every manly sentiment ! That those who are sick and degenerate *do not* communicate their illness and degeneracy to those that are healthy—this should surely be the first consideration on earth. But in order to prevent such an infection, it is necessary that those who are healthy should separate themselves as far as possible from those that are sick, should take care not even to look upon these latter. . . . Is it the duty of those who are healthy and strong and powerful to become doctors,

or nurses ? No, they could not misapprehend their duty more fundamentally—that which is higher should not degrade itself into becoming a tool of that which is lower, the pathos of rank and distance must for all eternity differentiate the duties of both. . . . And therefore fresh air ! Fresh air ! And away, far away from all these asylums and hospitals of modern civilisation ! And seek good company, seek *our* company ! Or else solitude, if it be necessary. But away at all events from the bad odours of corruption and concealed malady ! (Aber weg jedenfalls von den üblen Dünsten der inwendigen Verderbniss und des heimlichen Kranken-Wurmfrasses ! ’’) <sup>1</sup>

The profound malady which afflicts modern society is expressed by that religion of human suffering, of which Tolstoi is the best-known exponent. This religion reveals a disgust and weariness of life on the part of those who adhere to it ; being themselves weak and puny, being themselves victims of what they call social injustice, they have a horror of life, they seek to belittle life, to reduce its vitality. It is, according to them, only when we take consciousness of the enormous amount of suffering in the world, when we come to recognise our solidarity in and through suffering, that we realise what life really is—a trial which God compels us to submit to in order to try us. For Nietzsche, too, suffering is an ordeal through which each one of us must go if we wish to do something really great. No one has recognised more fully than Nietzsche the necessity of suffering, the beauty of suffering. But Nietzsche, precisely because he recognises this necessary and beautiful side of suffering, is a bitter enemy of every doctrine which favours even the slightest mitigation of it.

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vii. 432 ff.



The religion of human suffering, like socialism, like anarchism, like the democratic ideal, seeks, on the other hand, to abolish suffering, or at all events to reduce it to its lowest minimum possible. This doctrine—for democracy, socialism, anarchism, Tolstoism, and all similar creeds form but one doctrine in their essential points—has taken its rise—that is self-evident—among a race weak in vitality, physiologically degenerate, for whom life is not worth living, or at any rate not worth suffering for, not worth dying for. The *minimum* of vitality ; such is the aim and ideal of these socialists, pacifists, arbitrationists, and other utopists whose growth is cultivated by the modern State. And those who preach the minimum of vitality—that is to say, the great majority of Europeans to-day—preach it because they themselves suffer from a deficient vitality. The strong man, the *complete* man, to use Nietzsche's phrase, desires precisely the contrary—namely, the integral life, the maximum of vitality, because he is full of life, exuberant life, which only waits to be expanded and to explode. And if it be objected that the minimum of vitality as the aim of a race is in contradiction with the law of life which incites us to realise the maximum of vitality, so may the following reply be made : the minimum of vitality as the aim of life is a symptom of degeneracy and decay, and is the invariable accompaniment of every old and over-ripe civilisation which is drawing to its close. When the human species was still in its infancy, dependent for its existence on the caprices of Nature, wild and unchecked, the maximum of vitality was absolutely indispensable for the immediate maintenance of the species. Surrounded by foes on all sides, the primitive human being was compelled by the exigencies of his situation

to act vigorously and promptly. Necessity, as has been well said, is always the mother of invention. But as civilisation advanced, as the forces of nature became more and more subdued by man—as man's power over his surroundings increased ever more and more—so has gradually the need of the maximum of vitality been lost sight of, in the measure that man's situation in nature has become consolidated. There is no doubt that modern science has contributed very largely to this diminution of vitality in the species. The inventions and discoveries of science, by giving us an ever-greater sense of security and power, by ministering in a thousand ways to our comforts, by relieving us of the necessity of doing a thousand things for ourselves, by transforming our daily life more and more into a vast mechanism—these discoveries have made us indolent and nonchalant, where they have not destroyed the beauty and the poetry of the real life, which is the dangerous life. In these days of scientific progress, the dangerous life seems to us to be void of meaning. The whole aim and object of science, in its theoretical as well as in its practical domain, is to render life less dangerous, to relieve us of as much work as possible, to enable us to live comfortably, in all security, in a sort of *dolce far niente*.

Such, undoubtedly, we say, is the tendency of modern science; and thus science presents a double danger. It destroys the poetry and the beauty of life, the mercantilism and industrialism which it has suscitated is the deadly enemy of that idealism in the best sense of the word, which is the eternal fountain of the life in beauty. And it has incontestably fostered the growth of all the unhealthy plants of our modern culture—of democracy, socialism, anarchism,



pacifism and the rest. All those who partake of the democratic banquet under its numerous forms are also worshippers of the god of science. It is in the name of science that the gospel of emancipation, of humanitarianism, and other anti-natural doctrines, are preached. Every democracy is fundamentally hostile to the Church, because the Church recognises a hierarchy, because the Church knows the value of the "pathos of rank and distance," and because our sturdy democrats of to-day will have neither God nor master. The attack on the Church with which every democracy begins, the hostility to the Church manifested in every socialist programme, is but a means to an end. Science is the new deity to which appeal is made ; and it is in the name of science that the doctrines of the Rights of Man and other absurdities are promulgated.

But the universal sympathy which the religion of human suffering preaches, as well as being a manifestation of profound physiological degeneracy, is also an aggravation of that degeneracy. Sympathy is but the conveyance of one man's sufferings to another ; for if we sympathise, it is because we *suffer* with the victim of an injustice or of his own weakness ; we suffer, equally with him, from the evil he alleges himself to be a victim of ; and precisely it is this sentiment of *suffering with the victim* ("Mitleid") which constitutes sympathy. But the Over-Man is also filled with sympathy at the sight—not of the suffering of the human race, but of its degeneracy, of its belittlement.

"Hedonism, pessimism, utilitarianism, eudæmonism ; all these manners of thinking, which seek to measure the value of things according to the amount of joy or suffering which they cause—that is to say,

according to secondary and inferior measures—are the fruit of superficial and naïve judgment, which everyone with an artistic soul and creative power must look down on with irony and pity. Pity for you! But this is certainly not pity as you understand it: it is not sympathy with social suffering, nor with the victims and invalids of society, nor with those who, vicious and vanquished from the beginning, are strewn all around us; still less is it sympathy with those discontented, oppressed and revolted classes of society who thirst after power—which they call ‘freedom.’ *Our* sympathy is a higher and more far-sighted sympathy; we see the race *homo sapiens* becoming smaller and smaller, and becoming smaller through *your* efforts; and there are moments in which we contemplate with indescribable anxiety the results of *your* sympathy, in which we seek to defend ourselves against your sympathy, in which we find your seriousness more perilous than any light-heartedness. You wish if possible—and what “if possible” was ever more insane?—to abolish suffering. And we? It seems that we desire it intensified beyond what it ever has been! Comfort, as you understand it, that is no aim, it is the end of all things! A state of things which renders man absurd and contemptible, that makes his disappearance seem desirable! It is in the school of suffering—of intense suffering—that has been created every great thing which humanity has produced. This tension of the soul which stiffens itself under the load of misfortune, and thus learns to become strong; this shudder which seizes it in the face of a great catastrophe; its ingenuity and courage in supporting, interpreting, utilising misfortune; and everything which the soul possesses of deepness, mystery,



dissimulation, wisdom, *ruse*, greatness : is not all this acquired in the school of suffering, modelled and cast by great suffering ? *Your* pity goes out to the *creator*, to him who must be hardened, broken, torn, purified by fire and sword, to him who must *of necessity* suffer, who is made to suffer ! And *our* pity—do you not understand to whom it goes forth, when it seeks to defend itself against *your* pity, as against the worst of all weaknesses and cowardices ? Thus it is pity *against* pity ! ” <sup>1</sup>

He who loves life wishes life to be as complete as possible, he wishes for life in all its integrity, suffering as well as joy, suffering as a means of joy. The democrat, the socialist, the anarchist, who preach peace on earth and good-will to men, who believe in the realisation of an era in which all men shall be brothers, in which work will be reduced to a minimum, in which suffering will be unknown, from which all danger, all adventure, shall be banished—these utopists are the great haters of life. They sigh for the life of repose, for the life of mediocrity and honesty, for the life which shall be no better than a long suicide. Life is not worth fighting for, not worth suffering for, not worth confronting perils and adventures for ; life is recognised as the greatest evil of all, as Schopenhauer expressed it. Behold the prospect of the future opened out to us by the progress of democracy :

“ Behold ! said Zarathustra, I show you the *last man*.

“ ‘ What is love ? What is creation ? What is desire ? What is the star ? ’ Thus questions the last man, and he winks.

“ The earth has become small, and on its surface hops the last man, who belittles everything. His race

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vii. 180-181.

is indestructible, like that of the flea ; the last man lives the longest.

“ ‘ We have discovered happiness ’ ; thus say the last men, and they wink.

“ They have abandoned those countries where life is hard ; for one has need of heat. One likes one’s neighbour and one rubs oneself against him ; for one needs heat.

“ To fall ill or to be suspicious is for them a sin : one walks with infinite precautions. He who stumbles against the stones or against his fellow-men is mad.

“ A little poison from time to time : that causes one to dream well. And a lot of poison to finish with, in order to die pleasantly.

“ One works still, for work is a distraction. But one takes care that this distraction does not become an effort.

“ They have abolished poverty and wealth ; each causes too much worry. Who wishes still to command ? And who would obey ! Both commanding and obeying cause too much worry.

“ No shepherd and one single flock ! Everyone desires the same thing. All are equal : whoever ventures to think differently goes of his own free will into a lunatic asylum. . . .

“ ‘ We have discovered happiness,’ thus say the last men, and they wink.”<sup>1</sup>

As opposed to this ideal of the democracy, Nietzsche preaches the Over-Man. “ Slavery,” he writes, “ is a necessary condition of every true civilisation.” Nietzsche desires the systematic cultivation of a race of masters, similar to that of the patricians in Rome and of the “ aristoi ” in Athens. He desires the re-establishment of the system of castes, rigidly separ-

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 19, 20.



ated one from another, with just sufficient connection between them to enable a renewal of the race to take place periodically. The sufferings and toils of humanity are necessary in order to permit of the existence of a few creators, supreme masters of the destinies of mankind, sublime Olympian artists who constitute the justification of humanity. The progress of civilisation has not for its aim the emancipation of the masses. Nietzsche will not hear of such a thing as an "Arbeiterfrage," and is even prepared to denounce Prince Bismarck himself as a democrat and a socialist, because of his social legislation. Modern civilisation, which pretends to progress by emancipating the masses, and which considers every fresh concession to the most discontented sections of the populace as a step forward in the "onward march of progress"—this pitiable modern civilisation of ours is but a caricature of a civilisation. The real progress of civilisation will be realised first then, when the aim of the State will be the cultivation of a superior race. The State which devotes itself to this object will be a real State—that is to say, one wielding authority and able to command. The real interests of civilisation demand the existence of a vast, confused mass of humanity which shall serve as the instrument whereby the race of the *élite*, of the masters, may be cultivated.

The difference in the moral systems of the masters and of the slaves lies thus primordially in the difference between the physiological constitution of these two types. The masters, physiologically strong and robust, have a system of morals in harmony with the character of the race. The slaves, physiologically weak and degenerate, have likewise a system in harmony with their character, and which is consequently diametrically opposed to the system of the

masters. The masters are those creators and Olympian artists who *create* their own values and give, in the plenitude of their power, a meaning and a sense to life. For them, everything is sanctioned by their force, creative and destructive. Good is synonymous with brave, powerful, beautiful, intrepid, refined, delicate (this understood *inter pares*), ferocious, hard, cruel. The masters know no sympathy. They are essentially hard, and desire life in all its plenitude, adventurous, dangerous, mysterious. Otherwise with the slaves. The slaves suffer from a lack of vitality, consequently they desire life as peaceful, as comfortable, as mediocre as possible. Lacking physical force and the spirit of resource, they love solidarity, because they need it, because it is their only weapon of defence, because only by the force of numbers can they hope to repel the strong man, because it is necessary to their existence. Solidarity—that is the secret of all these inferior types of humanity, huddling themselves together in order to keep warm, living miserably because they cannot afford to live otherwise, sharing the same malignant hatred and envy of all that is strong, of all that is beautiful, of all that which is superior to them. The doctrines of nihilism which they put forth, cloaked under the names of goodness, sympathy, peacefulness, “eternal life,” “the kingdom of heaven,” are all of them doctrines of the decline of life. He whose vitality is in the ascendant loves war and danger and adventure and mystery; he is ready, nay, glad, to face any amount of suffering in order to attain his end; he is the man of great passions, who knows not what moderation means, for whom life is, to use Nietzsche’s beautiful definition, “a means of experience.” He, on the other hand, whose vitality is insufficient and declining will



naturally have no reason to love life, to wish for life ever more arduous, ever more powerful. He has every reason to wish for a "comfortable" life, for a life of ease and *dolce far niente*. But the inferior type, the slave, is filled with envy of that which is strong and beautiful and happy; envy and hatred are not propitious to the "peace of mind" preached by Christianity, that gospel of inferiority *par excellence*. Thus the slaves seek to destroy that which is strong and beautiful by bringing it down to their own level. This they have succeeded in doing, thanks to the moral law, to the Christian religion, to the insidious venom of sympathy and charity, and thanks also to their having infected the superior races with *their* doctrine of solidarity—which has nothing in common with the solidarity *inter pares* sometimes practised and always felt by the masters. However decadent Europe may be to-day—and this decadence translates itself in every one of our modern ideas—Nietzsche has by no means lost hope. On the contrary, decadence may be *necessary* in order to engender the race of the future, the race of commanders, of the Over-Man. Perhaps that which we ought to wish for is an increase of degeneracy, an increase of rate in the process of belittling the modern man. The race of the future, of the Over-Man, may very likely be engendered by a sort of auto-suppression, by the disgust awakened by the spectacle of the decay of humanity. The great *disgust* of man may be a sentiment of great fertility, capable of giving birth to a movement in favour of the systematic cultivation of a higher race, of a race which shall overthrow the present table of moral evaluations and substitute for it the new evaluation—that of the masters. The new values of the masters will regenerate humanity, will

give humanity an ideal, an aim, a *value*. Nietzsche is encouraged by the spectacle of Napoleon, that "great continuator of the Renaissance," to whom Europe has owed all its hopes and all its aspirations towards a higher state of things during the last century. "It is thanks to Napoleon (and not at all to the French Revolution, which brought forth nothing but 'fraternity' between nations and other absurd sentimentalism) that a couple of warlike centuries are now about to begin—centuries which have no equal in history; thanks to him that we have now entered into the period of *classical warfare*, of scientific, and at the same time popular, warfare on a large scale, which coming ages will look back on with envy and veneration as a Great Era. . . . It will be thus owing to Napoleon that the *man* in Europe will have triumphed at last over the Philistine and the merchant. . . . Napoleon, who in all modern ideas, and especially in our civilisation, saw something like a personal foe, proclaimed himself by this enmity to be the greatest continuator of the Renaissance; he has resurrected for us a complete piece of ancient art, the most important perhaps—a piece of granite."<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche sees in cruelty one of the noblest passions of the human soul. For it is the passion which incites us to seek ever more and more *knowledge*, than which nothing is more dangerous, nothing more apt to cause us suffering and disillusionment. "And knowledge itself! It may be for others something different, for instance a couch of repose, or a means of conversation, or a theme for musing idly—for me it represents a world of danger and triumphs, in which all the heroic sentiments have their place. '*Life as a means of experience*'—with this principle ever before one's

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," v. 313.



mind's eye one can live not only with courage, but one can live joyfully and laugh joyfully.”<sup>1</sup> And what have our modern ideas made of this search after knowledge, which for the intrepid thinker is a search amidst virgin forests, or amidst unknown seas, a means of adventure which tempts his love of unknown perils and surprises? We have the so-called “theory of knowledge” erected into a science. Knowledge is removed from the domain of practical life, with all its joys and woes, and hopes and fears, and transferred to the glacial region of abstract reasoning. An abstract “desire of truth,” an abstract “desire not to be deceived,” are substituted for the love of adventure and perilous risk as the motives for our search after knowledge. The cowardice prevalent to-day, in the face of that which is unknown, the desire to avoid all risks, all unpleasant surprises, is well illustrated by the development of the Agnostic theory of life, which seeks to hide the truth from our eyes behind the veil of the Unknowable. This metaphysical entity is a convenient screen with which to conceal that which we do not want to know, that which we are afraid to know. It enables us to postulate at least the possibility of a supranatural sanction for life; and with many persons this possibility is equivalent to a probability, if not to a certainty.

Taking it as a whole, the moral system of the inferior races, of the slaves, is a cowardly system. It is a system which proclaims life to be an evil, which pronounces life to be worth neither great efforts nor great dangers. It is too cowardly to put into practice the act to which its arguments all seem logically to lead—the act of suicide. It prefers less dangerous means, such as ascetic practices and the suppression

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” v. 245.

of all violence. The system of morals which triumphed with Christianity is a system which reduces life to a hemiplegic condition. It suppresses precisely that side of life which alone possesses value, which alone justifies life. The most consistent adepts of this system of morals are undoubtedly the socialists, "that most logical and also most pernicious race of men," as Nietzsche calls them. Nietzsche has socialism in abhorrence. Even as an organism is incapable of living without a head, so is a society incapable of living without chiefs to command it and lead it. The dogma of the equality of all men is a profoundly anti-natural conception; it is a conception which, even supposing its realisation to be possible, would render life hideous by its very monotony. The beauty of life lies precisely in the exuberant variety of its types, in the accentuation of individual contrasts, in the increasing of the distances which separate the classes of society. Of anarchism, Nietzsche is an equally convinced adversary. Anarchism is synonymous with the rule of the mob, with the destruction of all art and beauty, with the drying up of all the sources of human energy and activity. Anarchism, like socialism, has taken its rise among the lowest classes of the population, among the most envious and discontented and mutinous classes. It is an outburst of envy and hatred, of hatred of all that which is rich and powerful and lucky and well born. It is essentially a gospel of the rabble. And yet, it may be urged—it has been urged notably by M. Fouillée—that Nietzsche is himself an anarchist. "At the bottom," writes M. Fouillée, "Nietzsche is himself an anarchist, enemy of liberty and enemy of equality, an anarchist who considers that, all moral restraint being abolished,



the best thing that could happen is for a good tyrant to make the law. The democratic anarchists, after having suppressed all moral law, imagined that they would henceforth be exempt from all obedience ; but the aristocrat Nietzsche says to them : ‘ Now, more than ever, is the time for obedience ; there will always be slaves, and there will always be masters, such is the law of nature ; if, as I fear, you cannot rank among the masters who command, you must resign yourselves to being among the slaves who obey.’ ”<sup>1</sup> Such a view of Nietzsche’s position is admissible ; and yet great restrictions must be placed on the use of the word anarchist. Anarchism as understood in the sociological meaning of the term, and as explained by the most authorised exponents of philosophic anarchism, Kropotkine, Grave, Malato, signifies absence of all authority. Now Nietzsche is, as M. Fouilleé rightly says, enemy of all liberty and equality. He is essentially aristocratic and autocratic. His social ideal is the exactly diametrical opposite of the anarchist ideal. Whereas the creed of anarchism is summed up in the dictum : “ Neither God nor Master,” the creed of Nietzsche affirms the absolute necessity of slavery. Whereas anarchism implies full and integral liberty, full and integral equality, Nietzsche is a despot and an autocrat, and a despot more rigid than any tsar. Nietzsche is opposed to anarchism by all the deepest and most fundamental sentiments in his nature. His culture and extreme refinement, his aristocratic tastes and views, all tended to make him look down with repugnance on a movement originated by the most unhappy sections of the proletariat for its emancipa-

<sup>1</sup> A. Fouilleé : “ Nietzsche et l’Immoralisme,” p. 135 (Paris, 1902).

tion. He has all the antagonism of an artist for the rabble, which, from the Olympian heights on which he soared, he despised. Thus we think it a grave mistake to call Nietzsche an anarchist. The social system of Nietzsche—in so far as a social system is to be deduced from his writings—is an autocracy and an iron despotism, as far removed from the anarchist conception of society as the Poles asunder.

The essential about Nietzsche's theory of morals is that every system of morals is a manifestation of the Will of Power. Every such system must be reduced to its real value, which is that of an instrument in the struggle for existence. According to Nietzsche the only morality worth anything is the morality we have created for ourselves, each one for himself. But this proposition is subject to restriction. Only those who are *capable* of creating values, only the Over-Man, the Olympian artist and genius, has the right to create values. Goethe has recognised the truth of this when he wrote:

“ Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben  
Der täglich sie erobern muss.”

Zarathustra insists particularly on this point. He is not indulgent for those mediocrities who, swollen with vanity, arrogate to themselves a privilege belonging only to the chosen few of the *élite*.

“ Art thou a new force and a new law ? A first impulsion ? A wheel able to turn itself ? Canst thou compel the stars to revolve around thee ?

“ Alas ! Many are those who are devoured by the unhealthy desire to raise themselves ! Numerous are the ambitious which desperately agitate ! Prove to me that thou be not one of these hungry ones, devoured by ambition !



“ Alas ! Many are the great thoughts which produce no more than a breath of wind ; they do but swell and become thereby more empty !

“ Thou call’st thyself free ? But I would fain know the thought which rules thee, and not the nature of the yoke from which thou art released.

“ Art thou of the number of those who have a *right* to shake off the yoke ? For there are many who have thrown aside all that which gave them some value, in shaking off the yoke of servitude.” <sup>1</sup>

It is precisely the Over-Man whose duty and privilege it is to create new values, to give humanity an ideal and an aim, and to set above it a new table of laws. It is in order to fulfil this duty and privilege that the Over-Man is to be engendered. “ The inferior race,” says Nietzsche, “ needs a justification. Its *raison-d’être* is that it may serve the interests of a superior race, who will use it as a foundation without which it could not accomplish its task. It will be not only a race of masters, whose duty it will be to lead and govern the flock, but a race having its own sphere of life, gifted with an excess of strength which permits it realising more and more beauty, more and more courage, more and more culture and refinement, pushed to the length of a highly developed spirituality, an *affirmative* race, which commands every luxury, strong enough to be able to reject the tyranny of the categorical imperative, rich enough to avoid itself from falling into parsimony or pedantism ; a race living far beyond all good and evil, a hothouse for the cultivation of rare and strange plants.” This race alone it will be who can *create*. And he alone who can create, he alone who can and must daily conquer for himself his own liberty

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vi. 91, 92.

and his own right to live—he alone has the right to his *own* morality. With Nietzsche, anarchistic individualism is restricted to the superior race, to the strong and vigorous and healthy in mind and body. The Over-Man conquers freedom, not for its own sake but for the sake of the race ; he conquers freedom, because only in possession of full and integral freedom can he *create* ; only when he is free can he fulfil his task of setting a value upon humanity. But freedom is conditional upon this ultimate duty. To all who aspire to live beyond the domain of good and evil, Zarathustra poses the question : “ Frei wozu ? ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ Free for what ? ”



## CHAPTER IV

### THE OVER-MAN

“ AT one time or another,” wrote Nietzsche, “ in a *stronger* era than this weak, sceptical age of ours, a redeemer is bound to arise, one who knows the meaning of great love and great contempt, the man with the soul of a creator . . . he whose solitude is misunderstood by the people, as if it were a flight from Reality—whereas he does but bury himself ever deeper in Reality, in order that, when he once more appears in the light of day, he may draw from this reality the means for effecting its own redemption, its redemption from the curse which modern ideals have set upon it. This man of the future, who shall redeem us from the modern ideal, and also from all its consequences, from the great disgust, from the desire of negation, from nihilism, this herald of midday and of great resolutions, this liberator of the Will, who will give back to the world its aim and to humanity its hopes, this Antichrist, and Antinihilist, this vanquisher of God and the nirvana—*he must one day arise*.

“ But what am I saying ? Enough ! Enough ! for the present but one thing is appropriate for me—silence ; otherwise I should find myself talking about things which are allowed only to one younger than myself, to a ‘ spirit of the future,’ to one stronger than I am—which are allowed only to Zarathustra, to Zarathustra the godless ! ” <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vii. 395-396.

The great redeemer of humanity, who shall create new values for the race, and give back to the world an ideal worthy of it—this creator of the future is none other than the “Over-Man” (“Übermensch”), whose advent Zarathustra has come to preach.

Every age, according to Nietzsche, has its table of moral and metaphysical values peculiar to it. In this present age of ours the prevailing evaluation of moral values is one which places the qualities of goodness, love of justice, sympathy, altruism, in the foremost rank as virtues ; and on the other hand anathematizes the opposite qualities of cruelty, hardness, egoism. But this evaluation, which the majority of us are accustomed to consider as immutable, has not always prevailed. Every evaluation of moral values reflects the character, physiological and psychological, of its creators. The evaluation of moral values in an aristocratic age, in an age in which a few higher beings command the rest of humanity, whose destinies they control, will be an essentially aristocratic evaluation. The qualities which the ruling race possess, and which they consequently hold in honour, will be counted as the highest virtues ; such qualities will be those of bodily strength and beauty, courage, skill, love of adventure and daring, in the psychological as in other domains, culture and refinement of taste, intellectual probity and power. In a democratic age, on the contrary, when such a superior race no longer exists, or has lost its power, and when the inferior races are predominant, the evaluation of moral values will be different, and will reflect the character of the now predominant race ; the qualities of this race, those qualities which this race most greatly honours, will have been transformed into virtues ; the chief virtue will be solidarity,



as it is in their solidarity and force of numbers that the strength of this race lies. Lacking physical qualities and education, it will despise those qualities of bravery, love of danger and adventure, skill, which result from the possession of a good physique. As these qualities, personified by the stronger races, represent a danger to the security and existence of the weaker races, they will further be condemned as "bad" and "immoral." All which amounts to saying that our moral evaluations are the direct corollary of our physiological constitution. The moral law is not something apart from ourselves, outside ourselves. It enters within the sphere of the biological law which pushes everything that is, to persist and develop. Our moral evaluations are a means of adjusting ourselves to our environment. The multitudinous sensations which penetrate us from outside strike each of us in various ways. We say "yes" to those sensations which respond to the desires of our nature, and "no" to those which are repugnant to our nature. We judge the first lot of sensations to be "good," and the second lot to be "bad."

Now a striking fact which we witness at present in Europe, is the gradual and sure development of a mediocre type of humanity at the expense of the superior races. The gregarious animal, living with and by the herd, has eliminated, or nearly eliminated, the solitary individual, strong in his solitude. On the one hand we see a constant growth of morbid characters as a result of the progress of civilisation, notably an enormous increase of nervous disease. On the other hand, we see a steady growth of mediocrity, a growth fostered alike by the modern State and by modern science.

This growth of mediocrity and degeneracy is not,

we have said, a phenomenon to be condemned in itself. This Nietzsche has expressly recognised. The growth of mediocrity is an absolutely necessary condition for the establishment of a superior race, of a race of masters. History teaches us that the ruling races have invariably a very limited existence. The aristocracy of Athens was decayed in two hundred years, and yet Athens was comparatively peaceful. The duties of the *élite* are in themselves of a nature to destroy that *élite* within a short period. Their love of war and adventure, their ambition, decimate the ranks of the superior races. He who is strong and powerful, and a lover of life, consumes his energy without further thought. He spends out of the overflowing richness of his vitality. He cares not for a long life—for that longevity so extolled by certain scientists to-day—but what he desires is the intense life, the integral life, the *maximum* of life. Thus the existence of a more peaceful, mediocre and stable type is necessary in order to ensure the survival of the human species ; for if the latter were exclusively composed of the aristocratic and ruling races it would inevitably die out. Thus the “slaves,” the great mass of humanity, mediocre and uninteresting, must exist as a pedestal for the monument of genius.

But this development of the vast social fabric is a costly process. It represents an immense exploitation of human labour. And what is the value of this exploitation ? What is its aim ? If its aim be merely the greatest happiness of the greatest number, then its aim is low, its value is of no account. This gigantic exploitation of human labour, this complicated social processus, must, in order to be justified, find an aim which shall give it adequate value. And it can



only attain adequate value if its aim be the creation of a higher race, of a race of conquerors, of masters who shall, by their works, give a *meaning* to humanity. "Can we believe that the increase of the costs borne by every individual will result in an increase of profit? The contrary seems true: the individual costs, added together, produce generally a deficit; man finds himself diminished in value, so that one is at a loss to understand, in the end, the wherefore of this immense evolution. A *wherefore*? A new *wherefore*? That is what humanity most needs."<sup>1</sup> This exploitation of humanity which is implied in the maintenance and development of the social structure, is justified only if its aim be the creation of beauty, if its result be the creation of a superior race which shall set the seal of its own value on humanity and give to humanity ideals for a thousand years hence. The State is not an end in itself, any more than society is an end in itself; both are justified only as substructures on which the superstructure of the Over-Man may found itself. The superior race, the race of masters, is itself its own justification. It is a luxury of humanity, representing the profit realised on the exploitation of human labour concretised in the social organisation. It is a race of rare and tropical plants, of Olympian artists in the full sense of the word, who live in beauty, and create beauty, and create beauty by their force and power and intrepidity in all spheres of activity.

Professor Lichtenberger has given the following definition of the Over-Man:—"The state which man will attain when he has renounced the existing hierarchy of values, and rejected the Christian, democratic or ascetic ideals which prevail actually in

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xv. 422.

Europe, and when he has returned to the table of values admitted by the noble races, by the masters, who *create* for themselves their own values instead of receiving them from outside.”<sup>1</sup> But the conception of the Over-Man differs from all the philosophical conceptions which have preceded it, in that it is essentially the philosophy of a class, and of a very small and limited class. Zarathustra has come to preach the Over-Man, not to humanity, but to the chosen few of humanity, to the superior men who are disgusted with modern ideas and modern civilisation. Up in his grotto, in the solitude of the mountains, Zarathustra has collected a number of these superior men and given them hospitality. Here is the sage who, pessimistically, sees all around him symptoms of decay and death, and who preaches: “All is vanity.” Here are two kings, constitutional kings, who have abandoned their kingdoms because, being no longer the real chiefs of their subjects, they take no pleasure in the fiction of royalty. Here is the modern scientist, the “objective” thinker, who has devoted his life to a study of the brain-structure of the leech. Here is the magician, the professional politician, who has played every rôle and deceived everyone in turn, but who cannot deceive himself any longer and who seeks in vain a true genius. Here is the Most Hideous of Men, he who has slain God, he who represents all the miseries and sufferings of humanity during its long evolution from the anthropoid to man; God has been slain by the sight of so much hideousness, of so much misery and wretchedness, for God has had to contemplate this work of his unceasingly, and he has contemplated it until he is slain by it. Here is the last of the Popes,

<sup>1</sup> “La Philosophie de Nietzsche,” p. 149 (Paris, 1904).



unable to console himself for the death of God. Here, also, is the sceptic, he who has partaken of every opinion, of every conviction, in turn, only to abandon each one successively, and at last, disgusted, sceptical, without faith or hope, he has taken refuge in the solitude of the mountains with Zarathustra. For this poor wanderer Zarathustra is filled with pity. He sees in him the image of his shadow, for Zarathustra, too, has known every conviction, has been tossed about on the stormy sea of life, and knows life in all it brings of illusion and disappointment and deception. And he feels the disgust and disappointment of this wandering soul in distress, and he has for him some words of profound pity :

“Thou art my Shadow,” he said with sorrow.

“The danger thou dost confront is not small, O free spirit, bold traveller ! Thou hast spent a bad day ; take care that the night be not worse for thee.

“For wanderers such as thee, a prison itself ends by seeming a welcome refuge. Hast thou seen how quietly and peacefully the imprisoned malefactors sleep ? They sleep peacefully, for they enjoy their new security.

“Take care, lest in the end, thou shouldst become the slave of a narrow belief, of a hard and rigorous illusion ! Henceforth everything which is narrow and solid must necessarily prove attractive to thee.

“Thou hast lost thy aim ! . . . And thus—hast thou lost also thy way !

“Poor wandering soul, poor tired butterfly ! ” <sup>1</sup>

All these refugees to whom Zarathustra offers the hospitality of his mountain grotto are the “superior men” of to-day ; they are those “hard, sceptical spirits” who are the honour of our time ; disgusted

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” vi. 398-399.

with the growing democratisation of Europe, having lost their ideals and their faith and their hope, they are profoundly pessimistic, disgusted with man and the world, and aspiring to nothing but the nirvana. Neither material nor ideal satisfactions are henceforth adequate to them. They are the victims of modern culture.

But Zarathustra has not come merely to preach the "great disgust" of man. He has come to give to humanity "the new wherefore" which is necessary for its continued existence. Zarathustra has come to preach a new gospel, to give to the world a new aim and a new ideal. And this new aim and ideal is symbolised by the Over-Man.

"Behold, I show you the Over-Man. Man is something which must be surpassed. What have you done to surpass him ?

"All that which has existed up till now has created something superior to it ; and do you wish to be the outgoing tide and to return to the ape rather than surmount man ?

"What is the ape to man ? An object of derision and shame. And thus must also be man an object of derision and shame for the Over-Man.

"You have followed the road which leads from the worm upwards to man ; and much of the worm has clung to you. Formerly you were apes, and even now is man more ape-like than any ape. . . .

"Behold, I show you the Over-Man.

"The Over-Man is the justification of all life. Your Will it must be that says : let the Over-Man be the justification of all life." <sup>1</sup>

The Over-Man will differ profoundly from the man of to-day, from the "modern man," in that he will

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," vi. 13.



possess in a very high degree all those qualities which the modern man so conspicuously lacks—will of power, independence, self-confidence. “The modern man,” the mediocrity, possesses no individual value ; his sole value is derived from the collectivity of which he is a member, from the social organisation of which he is one of the instruments. The Over-Man, on the other hand, is essentially a solitary being, loving solitude, and strong enough to bear solitude, and strong by reason of his great solitude. The Over-Man is “the milestone which marks the degree of progress attained by humanity at certain epoques,”<sup>1</sup> he is the synthesis which resumes all this progress in himself. The modern man is mediocre, and, because mediocre, he believes in the equality of all men. But no dogma is more abhorrent to the Over-Man than the dogma of equality ; an aristocrat himself, he believes in the “pathos of distance” and in the necessity of a hierarchy of rank and values. The Over-Man lives essentially *inter pares* ; his morality is the morality of a caste ; and he considers himself free from any sort of duty or responsibility towards the inferior masses of humanity. His acts admit of no comparison ; they are unique and belong to him alone. “Reciprocity is the greatest of vulgarities ; the conviction that something which I do, cannot and may not be done by others (except in the most privileged sphere of my equals, *inter pares*), that in a deeper sense one never can give back because one is something which occurs but once . . . this conviction is the reason of the separation between the aristocracy and the masses, for the masses believe in equality, and consequently in reciprocity.”<sup>2</sup> Neither does the Over-Man attempt

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” xv. 482.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xv. 458.

in any way to propagate or to popularise his ideal. He knows that his code of honour and morality is an aristocratic code, a code for him and his equals only ; and that its popularisation among the masses, who are unable to understand it, would infallibly result in anarchy. Besides which, the great attraction of his code—that it is a code for the few, for the privileged, a mark of distinction which differentiates him from the mass—would disappear were this code ever to become “ popular.” The virtue of the Over-Man is the “ virtue ” of the Renaissance, terrible and fraught with danger for the masses. Such a virtue is but the most luxurious and extravagant form of vice, partaking of the immorality of all nature, since it is a virtue in conformity with nature. “ It is, in a word, the most formidable of all vices, if one appreciates it according to the degree of its nocivity for others.”<sup>1</sup>

The Over-Man does not regard truth with the superstitious awe of the rest of mankind. Neither does he despise truth. But he knows that truth is but an instrument in the struggle for life, that there is no such thing as “ truth ” in itself, and that truth is an instrument of power. It is as an instrument of power that he admires truth, that he seeks to obtain more and more knowledge ; if life be a means of acquiring knowledge, knowledge is in turn a means of acquiring power. Whereas the character of the lesser type of humanity is complex, great force of intellect of a certain kind existing side by side with physiological degeneracy, the character of the Over-Man is simple. In his every act his superabundant force and vitality manifest themselves. He possesses a powerful temperament, he is capable of giving vent to the strongest passions, and strong enough to give

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” xv. 450.



vent to them, and strong enough also—the greatest strength of all—to conquer himself. Both in the physical and intellectual domain the Over-Man is of a pugnacious and combative disposition. He needs the fight in order to persist and develop. The fight is to him the bread of life. And for this reason, because the good fight is necessary to his existence, and because he loathes the “peace of mind” recommended by moralists, as the worst of diseases—for this reason he seeks a good enemy, pugnacious and obstinate like himself, an enemy of whom he can be legitimately proud.

And what, then, are the means best adapted to the cultivation of the Over-Man, of the superior race of the future? In the first place, great suffering is necessary. “It is in the school of suffering—of *intense* suffering—that has been created every great thing which humanity has produced. This tension of the soul, which stiffens itself under the load of misfortune, and thus learns to become strong; this shudder which seizes it in the face of a great catastrophe; its ingenuity and courage in supporting, interpreting, utilising misfortune; and everything which the soul possesses of deepness, mystery, dissimulation, wisdom, *ruse*, greatness: is not all this acquired in the school of suffering, modelled and cast by great suffering?” We have already cited this beautiful passage from Nietzsche. The creator must be “hardened, broken, torn, purified by fire and sword,” he must “of *necessity* suffer.” And in order to withstand suffering, in order to be able to profit by misfortune and not succumb to it, it is essential that the creator be hardened, that he be “hard as brass, nobler than brass.” The Over-Man must be disciplined, and rigidly disciplined. It is in the school of harsh and

rigid discipline that one learns to command and also to obey. For if the Over-Man be a commander, if it be his task to set an aim and an ideal before humanity, he must also know how to obey. The democratic doctrine of "neither God nor master" is to Nietzsche both abhorrent and anti-natural. He who commands must also know how to obey, if necessary, and his authority to command must be based on his capacity to obey. "In any case, nothing is more desirable than that one should be subjected in good time to a rigid discipline. . . . That which stamps the 'hard school' as a good school, and which distinguishes it from the others, is that much is exacted there, and severely exacted. At such a school, good work, even excellent work, is claimed as being normal; praise is rare, and indulgence is unknown. Such a school is necessary from all points of view, for things bodily and mental, because it is impossible to distinguish between these. The same discipline it is which produces both the good soldier and the good professor, and, all things considered, there is no good professor but who has within him the instincts of a good soldier. What is necessary is to know both how to command and how to obey without cringing; to be able to stand in the ranks, and yet be ready at any moment to assume command; to prefer danger to safety; to be able not to weigh in the balance that which is permitted and that which is forbidden; to be a greater foe of skilfulness, of meanness, and of parasitism than of evil. . . . What is the lesson which one learns in such a school of discipline? To obey and to command." <sup>1</sup>

And Nietzsche is not soft-hearted for those who would be his disciples. "I wish those who interest

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xv. 460.



me in one way or another," he writes, "I wish them every suffering, isolation, illness, ill-treatment, opprobrium. I wish that they may have personal experience of the deepest self-disgust, of self-torture and self-defiance, of the great distress of defeat. I have no pity for them, for I wish them the only thing which can prove whether or not they possess any real value :—that they hold good." <sup>1</sup>

But the Over-Man must not only be able to *bear* great suffering ; he must not only have the courage to seek great suffering and be able to love great suffering as being that which is noblest on earth ; he must also be able to *inflict* great suffering. The capacity to inflict great suffering without listening to the cries of the victim is what is really great in a man's character. "Who can hope to attain anything great," asks Nietzsche, "if he does not possess sufficient strength and force of will to be able to *inflict* great suffering ? To be able to suffer is the least of things ; weak women and even slaves can surpass themselves in that. But not to succumb to a feeling of distress and uncertainty when one inflicts great suffering and listens to the shriek of the sufferer—that is great, that is true greatness." <sup>2</sup>

The essence of the Over-Man is, according to Nietzsche, that he is true to nature. He is a return to nature. The systems of morals which humanity has set up one after another are all of them systems contrary to nature, which set up a barrier between man and nature. The great law of life is : "Live *wholly*, live *fully*." This law the Over-Man realises. Knowledge and truth are but instruments which he employs in order to attain his end quicker and more surely.

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xv. 461.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xv. 245.

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Truth is, for Nietzsche, an expression of a certain relation between the cognisant subject and the object known, which results in an increase of power of the former over the latter. When the Over-Man seeks knowledge, he is seeking to increase his power. The sentiment actuating the Over-Man is always the sentiment of the Will of Power. The Over-Man is the incarnation of the Will of Power under its noblest aspect. That Will of Power it is which pushes him to seek for the realisation of life in all its integrity ; for only in the measure that we can afford to live fully, to be extravagant and thriftless with our vital power—only in that measure are we strong and powerful.

The Over-Man, then, is hard. He is egotistical, and seeks the integral development of his personality. He knows neither pity, nor sympathy, nor tender-heartedness, nor justice. He knows but one law—and that is his own law, the law of his own force, a law which is at once its own sanction and its own delimitation. The great trial which Zarathustra is compelled to undergo, the trial which shall show whether indeed Zarathustra is capable of placing a new table of values before humanity, is the *trial of sympathy*. Zarathustra meets, in a vile place where nothing grows and only serpents are to be found—he meets there suddenly an object, a repulsive and awful-looking object, the Most Hideous of Men, he who represents all the accumulated load of humanity's sufferings and misfortunes, he who has slain God by his very hideousness, for even God could not look with impunity on so much hideousness and misery. And when he first sees this awful-looking object, Zarathustra has a moment's hesitation, he endures for a moment the distress of uncertainty and poignant



anguish, and he falls to the ground. But it is only for a moment. The combat is swift and deadly, but Zarathustra is capable of surmounting himself. He rises again after a minute, his heart steeled against all pity, and goes on his way. Zarathustra has vanquished pity ; he has withstood the spectacle of the Most Hideous of Men, of him whose very hideousness has slain God, and he has emerged stronger than ever from the ordeal. Pity and sympathy have been crushed ; and the new table which Zarathustra has come to place above humanity has been sanctified ! “ Werdet hart ! ”

The sanction of the Over-Man is the doctrine of the Everlasting Return, which Zarathustra has come to preach in tones of lyrical solemnity. It was in 1881, in the forest of Silvaplana, by Sils-Maria, by a glorious summer sunshine, that the idea of the Everlasting Return occurred for the first time to Nietzsche, “ at 6000 feet above the sea and far higher still above all things human.” What is the philosophy of the Everlasting Return ?

The sum of forces which constitute the universe appear to be both *constant* and *determined*. We cannot suppose that these forces diminish, even in the smallest degree, for were this the case the sum-total would have been exhausted long before now, as an *infinite* lapse of time has preceded this present moment. We are equally unable to suppose that the sum-total of cosmic forces increases constantly ; for in order to increase, nourishment is necessary ; and whence could this nourishment, this factor necessary to growth, be obtained ? If we believe in an indefinite progression of the cosmic forces, we believe in a perpetual miracle. We are thus left in the presence of one single hypothesis, that the sum of cosmic forces is not indefinite, but

definite and constant. Now, let us suppose those forces reacting one on another at haphazard, in accordance with the law of combinations, one combination producing necessarily the following combinations, and so on throughout eternal time. What will happen? In the first place, we are obliged to admit that these forces have never attained permanent equilibrium, and that such an equilibrium will never be attained. Such a combination is not *per se* an impossibility, but, were it possible, it must have been arrived at ere now, seeing that time is infinite; and, had it been produced, life would exist no longer, as movement is inherent to life, and complete equilibrium signifies that state which exists when the forces belonging to an aggregate and capable of being opposed by it to the forces of the environment, are balanced by the forces to which the aggregate is exposed—that is, death. Now, we are confronted by the fact that a sum of forces which is constant and determined produces in the infinity of time a series of combinations. Since time is *infinite*, and since the sum of active forces is *not infinite but determined*, a moment must come when the simple chances of combinations reproduce a condition of momentary equilibrium which has already been realised. But this combination, once reproduced, must cause the entire series of combinations once produced to occur again, in virtue of the law of universal determinism. In this way, the evolution of the world brings back an indefinite number of times the same phases and combinations; it is a gigantic wheel revolving in eternal time and eternal space. Every one of us has lived an indefinite number of times this life of his, and every one of us will continue to live this life over and over again, eternally.



This thought of the Everlasting Return of all things inspired Nietzsche with mingled dread and enthusiasm. "Man!" he wrote, "thy whole life, like an hour-glass, will ever return and will ever flow back—each one of these existences being separated from the other only by the great long minute of time necessary in order that all the conditions which gave thee birth may be reproduced in the universal cycle. And then shalt thou find again every suffering and every joy, and every friend and every foe, and every hope and every error, and every blade of grass and every ray of sunshine, and the whole order of things. This cycle, in which thou art an atom, reappears again. And in every cycle of human existence there is one hour, one supreme hour, in which, at first one individual, then many, then all, attain to the consciousness of that most powerful of thoughts—the Everlasting Return of all things; and in each case humanity attains through that thought the hour of midday." <sup>1</sup>

And, indeed, it requires no ordinary courage to be able to face that conception of the Everlasting Return of all things. When one thinks of it, when one reflects on the meaning of it, it appears truly intolerable. How many are there who could support cheerfully and without indescribable horror the thought that every tear and every suffering, and every disillusionment and every disappointment, and every care and every tragedy, are to recur again, and not once, and not twice, but eternally? What does such a doctrine signify to all those "who are weary and are heavy-laden?"

In truth, the doctrine of the Everlasting Return is not for such as these. It is one of those truths—

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xii. 122.

Nietzsche is always affirming the truth of certain propositions, although he professes to be an irreconcilable enemy of the truth—which are not “for the multitude.” Were such a truth communicated to the masses, then nihilism of the worst kind, disgust and hatred of life, would be the natural consequences. It is essentially a truth destined only for such as are fit to receive it—and these are the Over-Men and the superior race generally.

The Everlasting Return is the sanction of this race. It is a sort of test of its strength, of its power of resistance, and of its love of life. The great doctrine of Nietzsche, the *amor fati*, the Dionysian love of life under all its forms, of life whatever it may be or bring, this doctrine finds its supreme realisation in the Over-Man. The Over-Man is a fatalist ; he is also an illusionist ; but he is also and above all brave, and he is also and above all passionately fond of life. He is a fatalist, who knows that an inexorable Destiny hangs over mankind ; he knows that he himself is a fatality ; he is an illusionist, who entertains no vain dreams as to the reality of things, who knows that there is no answer to the eternal “Wherefore?” of humanity, that the world has neither aim nor sense nor justification in itself, that our knowledge, our much-vaunted knowledge itself, is but an instrument in the struggle for existence. But the Over-Man is brave, and he loves life, he loves life above all things, and he loves life because life is the one fact which is established, because life is the one possibility of realising his own power and his own possibilities. Browning has said of life :

“ For Life, with all it brings of Joy and Woe  
And Hope and Fear ;  
Is just our chance o’ the prize of learning Love.”



Not of learning love alone, replies the Over-Man, but of learning also Hate, and the great hate as well as the great love—in a word, life is just our chance of the prize of learning *Life* itself, and life in all its aspects, life in its integrity, the dangerous life and the adventurous life, and the life which always creates, and which is essentially the life of action. And this chance, in the view of the Over-Man, can never be long enough. Life is so full of hidden treasures, so rich with infinite possibilities, that eternity alone suffices to exhaust it. Life is worth eternity. Not only is life worth living once, now—but it is worth living over and over again, eternally, unceasingly, because of the chance it gives us of realising its infinite possibilities. Such is the great doctrine—a doctrine in which we are transported beyond and above mere optimism or pessimism into a sphere of enthusiastic affirmation — which Zarathustra preaches unto those who are weary of life and who regard life, with Schopenhauer, as “the greatest crime of all.”

And Zarathustra has preached the gospel of life, of the love of life, of the beauties of life ; he has opened vast horizons to our view, beyond which stretch horizons vaster still, stretching into infinity. “All these bold birds who fly away to the horizon : certainly ! somewhere or other must they stop, some day must they reach a point beyond which they cannot fly. . . . But should we conclude therefore that no further immensity stretches before them, that they have gone as far as one *can* go ? All our greatest masters and forerunners have at length come to a standstill, and it is by no means the proudest or most attractive of situations, that of a tired traveller come to a standstill ; you and I must both of us experience

it. But what matters it to you or me! *Other birds will fly farther!* Our insight and belief accompanies them in their flight upwards, it rises straight above our head and above its impotence, it sees the flock of far more powerful birds than we are, birds who are aiming at that which was also our aim, and where all around is the endless ocean! And whither do we seek to go? Do we seek to cross the ocean? . . . Why do we steer just towards that very spot where, up till now, every sun of humanity has gone down? Will it be said of us perhaps, that we also, bound for the west, hoped to discover a new India—but that our fate was to be shipwrecked among the seas of Infinity?"<sup>1</sup> To this question, which Nietzsche poses at the end of "Morgenröthe," Zarathustra answers confidently and joyfully. What matters it if we be shipwrecked? What matters it if we founder among the icebergs of the Arctic seas or lose ourselves among the mists of the ocean of Infinity? *Life is a means of experience.* The beauty of life resides in its dangers, in its privations, in its sacrifices voluntarily endured and cheerfully, in its great adventures. The life which is good is the life which seeks its fullest realisation, through peril and hardship and adventure, even though it be shipwrecked in the course of its dangerous explorations. But precisely because of these dangerous operations should we love life and value life, and we should love life and value life to such an extent that we are ready to live this life over and over again, to live it eternally so that we may go ever further on the road of exploration, so that we may be able to confront ever new perils, and thus *realise life* in the true sense of the word.

The Over-Man is thus first and foremost a brave man,

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," iv. 371-372.



intrepid, daring, adventurous, fond of danger. And this courage applies not only to the physical domain, but also to the psychological. The philosopher who, in the silence of his study, seeks to probe the deepest problems of knowledge, problems on which depends the very existence of the human species—the philosopher who seeks ever the “psychological nudity” of every problem which confronts him—such a philosopher is not less brave and adventurous and intrepid than the explorer of jungles and deserts. But the Over-Man is essentially the most *complete* type of humanity. He will be as superior to the man of to-day as man is superior to the gorilla. The Over-Man will combine both physical and mental capacities in the highest degree. He will himself create the tables of values for humanity and for himself. He will incarnate all the progress of humanity ; he will synthetise the combined labour of all the units forming the social organisation ; he will represent the profit realised by that labour. By his deeds, by his creation as by his destruction, he will justify humanity and give a reply to the “Wherefore?” with which humanity seeks to justify its existence. If it be asked if we have had any Over-Men up till now in history, it may be replied that Pericles and Themistocles, Thucydides and Æschylus, Alexander and Julius Cæsar, Macchiavelli and Cesare Borgia, Shakespeare and Goethe, Napoleon and Cecil Rhodes have, all of them, in different ways, been approaches to the type. They have approached the Over-Man alike by their intellectual and physical power, by their contempt for all morals, by their gigantic superiority over the rest of mankind. But the Over-Man will surpass all these, alike by his intellectual and physical force—he will be a great destroyer and a scourge—

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by his contempt for the moral law, and by his immeasurable superiority over mere man. In the Over-Man will be realised the synthesis of humanity's collective efforts and force. The Over-Man, by his very existence, will justify humanity.



## CHAPTER V

### NIETZSCHE AND MAX STIRNER

THE name of Max Stirner, the author of that remarkable work, "The Unique and his Property,"<sup>1</sup> is a name almost unknown, especially in England. And yet this work of Stirner is in many respects a remarkable one. Professor Basch, in the valuable study of Stirner and his doctrines which he published recently, has remarked :

"Stirner was noticed first of all as a precursor of Nietzsche. Subsequently, on studying the "Unique" more profoundly, it was discovered—according to Eduard von Hartmann—that not only is this genial work by no means inferior in style to the compositions of Nietzsche, but that also its philosophical value is a thousand times greater. If Nietzsche was the poet and the musician of unyielding individualism, Stirner endeavoured to be its philosophic champion. Stirner gave to individualism the only psychological foundation on which it could be established—namely, the pre-eminence of feeling and will over the strictly intellectual faculties. And, through this combat which he sustained against intellectualism, Stirner found himself closely allied

<sup>1</sup> "Der Einzige und sein Eigentum." Published in 1843. A French translation by M. Réclaire has been published by Stock, in Paris. With regard to the career of Stirner, *vide* J. H. Mackay: "Max Stirner, sein Leben, sein Werk" (Berlin, 1898).

to one of the leading tendencies of contemporary philosophic thought. . . . Stirner is an anarchist-individualist and, despite his words of sympathy for the proletariat, he is an aristocrat, whereas the theoreticians of contemporary anarchism are, all of them, democrats and communists. But Stirner, like them, is an anarchist. Like them, he insists above all things on the total liberation of the individual, on the substitution of voluntary co-operation for compulsory co-operation, of the régime of contract for the régime of coercion, of the regime of association for the régime of the State.”<sup>1</sup>

This appreciation of Professor Basch requires, to our mind, considerable modification. We are unable to agree with Dr von Hartmann that Stirner's work, alike as regards the style and the contents, is superior to that of Nietzsche. Doubtless Dr von Hartmann is embittered against Nietzsche owing to the deadly sarcasms of the latter at his expense. As to Stirner being a precursor of Nietzsche, this is true only to a very limited extent. But as several authorities on Nietzsche have sought to connect the two names, and to show identities between Stirner and Nietzsche which are, we think, more or less doubtful, we think it advisable to devote a brief discussion to the subject.

Let us begin by admitting that there do indeed exist several points of contact between these two philosophers, of which the most striking is the exaltation of egoism by both. “Ego sum Ego” says Stirner. “For Me, nothing is above Me. . . . My object is neither good nor bad, neither love nor hatred, my object is my own—and it is Unique, even as I am

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Basch : “ L'Individualisme Anarchiste : Max Stirner,” pp. iii.-iv. (Paris, 1904).



Unique.” Egoism, repeats Nietzsche, is the first and greatest of qualities; what is repugnant, what is detestable, is not egoism, which constitutes the essence of our nature; what is detestable is the concealing of egoism, or the attempt to conceal it, under the specious names of altruism, love of others, sympathy. Both Stirner and Nietzsche aim at the integral realisation of life; both aim at the highest possible exaltation of the individual; both continually oppose the individual and his rights as individual, to the State, the Church, the moral law, and other extraneous and illegitimate claimants. Both these are individualists, who believe in life, and life and liberty, in power, in the *integral* life.

So far Stirner and Nietzsche are agreed; and were we only to look upon the surface, there would seem no reason for refusing to establish a strict parallel between the poet of Zarathustra and the more than half-forgotten author of “Der Einzige.” For we see that both Stirner and Nietzsche idealise *force*. Both believe in the Will of Power as the cardinal fact of existence. Both insist on the pre-eminence of the voluntary over the purely intellectual sentiments. Both consider the Will as the elementary factor, and both glorify force and power and the development, unchecked and unfettered, of the strong man, ruthless and unscrupulous in its strength.

Certainly, we are far from denying the fact that on all these points Stirner has preceded Nietzsche. Yet when we come to look closer, we find that the idea which actuated Stirner is by no means the idea which actuated Nietzsche. Stirner has concentrated his attention exclusively on the *individual as individual*. Nietzsche has always had in view the cultivation of a superior race. Beyond and above the individual,

Nietzsche has cast his eyes on the race, on the race of the future, strong, noble, free ; justifying the whole of creation by its strength, nobility and freedom.

Thus Nietzsche is an individualist, but he is an individualist not for the sake of the individual as individual, but for the sake of the race. Nietzsche is filled with admiration before the spectacle of a Cesare Borgia or a Napoleon, these grand specimens of the "tropical man," these examples of the robust, fearless, unfettered human beast of prey. But he looks upon them as possessing a supreme value in that through them, and on account of them, humanity is justified, and the whole of creation is justified. Such types of humanity as Cesare Borgia and Napoleon, such types as the Over-Man of the future, are works of art, gloriously beautiful in their strength, in their ferocious Will of Power. But their supreme value as works of art is that they are the justification of the world. If, on the one hand, humanity possesses no value or beauty in itself, and exists only for the benefit of a few superior types ; on the other hand, these superior types are to be admired, not so much for their purely individual beauty, but because by them man is justified, and the whole of creation is rendered beautiful, and life receives its supreme sanction. Their individual beauty shines forth upon the whole of creation, and imparts to all life a value which is permanent and undying. The glory of one single one of these Over-Men constitutes also the glory of the whole of existence. "Suppose we have said yes to one single second, so have we said yes, not only to ourselves, but to the whole of existence. For nothing stands alone, whether in ourselves or in the world. And if, in one supreme moment, our soul has trembled like unto a harp



in the fulness of its joy, so was eternity necessary in order to bring about this one moment, and the whole of eternity was in this one moment sanctioned, redeemed, justified, and affirmed.”<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche has laid especial stress on the need of increasing the strength of the collectivity, so as to be able to form an excess of strength, which excess shall constitute a reserve for the future generation. Nietzsche’s whole thought concerns the generation of to-morrow, the race of the future, the race of conquerors, of the Over-Man. Zarathustra lays especial strength on the aim and ideal of marriage, as being the procreation of the creator, of the Over-Man. Nietzsche, once more, is an individualist for the sake of the future. He preaches the liberation of man, the cultivation of egoism, because only by means of liberty and egoism can the Over-Man of to-morrow be created.

Nietzsche is an egoist, most certainly ; and he preaches egoism—unrestrained, ferocious egoism. But does he preach it for the sake of the joys of the egoist, does he preach it from any utilitarian motive ? Emphatically no. Nietzsche’s egoism is an ideal egoism, an egoism which is to be practised because only through it can an amelioration of the human race take place. It is an egoism which ends by destroying itself. Nietzsche, indeed, says : “ Be egotistical, cultivate your individuality, realise life, *your* life, integrally, fully, wholly, realise your life to the utmost of its possibilities ; destroy greatly and create greatly. And in thus cultivating your strength and powers, by thus destroying and creating, you will give to humanity a splendid example of the Will of Power. Make war, if it be in your power, massacre, create havoc, remodel the map of the world at your pleasure,

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” xv. 484.

use the lives of hundreds of thousands of slaves as pawns in the great game you are playing with Chance, assert yourself and your power at whatever cost, be extravagant and thriftless in blood and treasure out of the boundless wealth of your personality—and you will remain in history as one of the great landmarks of humanity, as one of its masterpieces of art, as one of its eternal riddles, and also as one of those monuments which arise, rare and far between, more solid than granite and whiter than white marble, and which proclaim to the four horizons: ‘life is worth living, humanity is justified, the world is redeemed, by me.’ ” The aim of the egoist, in a word, should be not self-satisfaction alone; but also, and above all, the redemption through him of all life.

Such, however, is not the thought of Stirner: egoism begins and ends with the individual. For Stirner, it is not “man” or “the race” which is the ideal; it is the “individual,” the Unique, the Ego. Whereas Stirner proclaims the essential unicity of the Ego, Nietzsche recognises expressly the solidarity *inter pares* of the superior race, of the Over-Men. It may be objected that Stirner’s association of egoists is the equivalent of Nietzsche’s idea of the moral system of the masters. But there is a fundamental difference. Nietzsche has based his whole theory of the Over-Man on the separation of humanity into two distinct races, well apart, without lien or connection between them. For Nietzsche there is a race of masters and a race of slaves; and the assertion of their individuality, unrestrained and unfettered, is permitted solely to the masters. Stirner makes no such distinction, at all events theoretically. In practice his doctrine must result inevitably in the triumph of the stronger. But Stirner is, as Professor



Basch well says, an anarchist ; and Nietzsche is just the very reverse.

Stirner throws aside all morality. For the Ego, for the Unique, nothing exists but himself. The Unique knows no object except his own object. God, Spirit, Morality, all are phantoms. The Ego alone is a reality. The social organisation of Stirner is anarchy, and the most complete anarchy, and the unrestrained conflict of all against all ; for everyone has a right to everything which it is in his *power* to possess. Force is the sole law. The one object of life is the entire satisfaction of life, but understood in a hedonistic sense. Stirner is as essentially hedonistic as he is anarchical.

But Nietzsche, too, preaches the gospel of force, and of the ruthless trampling down of the weak, and of the equally ruthless advent of the Over-Man ? Perfectly true. Yet Nietzsche differs from Stirner in that he is neither hedonistic nor an anarchist, and in that he arrives at the establishment of a law which, whether it be *inter pares* only or not, is none the less a law, and a strict law, a very strict law in fact. Let us see.

Nietzsche proclaims himself an immoralist ; and yet he arrives at moralism, and at a very rigid moralism. It may be a moralism which is " beyond moralism " (" Jenseits der Moral "), to use a favourite phrase of his. But, if the masters have no duties towards the inferior races, their subordinates ; if force is the only law which they know as far as the inferior races are concerned ; yet *inter pares* the masters have a moral law, and they obey it. The very fact of commanding them to " realise life in all its plenitude," to " live fully," is itself already a *law*. And the masters are exhorted to great self-sacrifice,

to be hard towards themselves as towards others, to be rigorously hard towards themselves, to be chivalrous and honourable towards their equals, in a word, to render themselves worthy of their caste and of their traditions. Thus from behind the immoralism of Nietzsche springs up a system of morals—a code of honour *inter pares*, Nietzsche would have called it, but a code of honour implies some sort of morality underlying it. The thought which must always inspire the masters, which must be the *leitmotif* of these masters, is the thought of the race of to-morrow. The whole world-process is a perpetual Becoming, without reason or sanction in itself, and it is the duty of the masters to *create* a sanction for it, to give it, out of the plenitude of their power, a reason. Humanity is thus justified by the superior types which it produces ; and on these types lies the responsibility, the heavy responsibility, of justifying humanity.

Thus the masters have their rights certainly ; they have the right to develop themselves integrally, to employ the inferior types of humanity as pawns or instruments in the great game they are playing. But if they have rights, heavy also are their duties, both towards themselves and towards the race. Their duty it is to adventure themselves, to risk life and honour a thousand times, to live in constant peril ; their duty it is, also, to be hard towards themselves ; the bed of moss is denied them, and, if they are permitted to stretch humanity on the bed of thorns, that bed of thorns is also their usual place of repose. The masters are above optimism, as they are above pessimism. They are ferocious towards others, they are a scourge for humanity, they deliberately inflict the direst sufferings on humanity. But they do this



because they know that only in the school of suffering, in the school of intense suffering, can humanity be regenerated and redeemed. And they ! The Over-Man, the creator, is he who must *necessarily* suffer, and intensely suffer, who must be broken on the wheel, torn, burned, racked, confronted with every hardship and every misery, because only by these means can he learn to *live greatly*. In order to live greatly it is necessary to live dangerously.

Those who represent the Over-Man as the incarnation of selfishness are thus grievously mistaken. It is *not* his own pleasure that the Over-Man seeks, but the justification of the eternal Becoming, which is the eternal world-process, but the redemption of humanity through suffering, through great and intense suffering. And out of this intense suffering emerges precisely that supreme object and work of art which is the Over-Man, who by his deeds shall justify all that which is miserable and pitiable in life, and raise it to a pinnacle of beauty. The Over-Man, modelled in the school of suffering, shall in turn reflect his own glory on the whole of life ; and life, viewed in the wondrous light shed on it by the glory of the Over-Man, shall be redeemed and affirmed and sanctified and justified.

Such, then, is the egoism of Nietzsche. It is an egoism which confounds itself with what we are accustomed to call altruism, and altruism in the highest sense. The egoism of Nietzsche, in a word, is the egoism, not of the individual, but of the race, of the superior race, who by their egoism, and through their egoism, and on account of their egoism, justify humanity, and redeem life from what it would otherwise be—a process without sense or reason or aim. The egoism of Nietzsche surpasses the individual. It breaks down the barriers set up by the fact of in-

dividuation, and beyond the individual, beyond the circle of individual pleasures and pains, it sees the vast panorama of the future of the race, it sees the panorama of life in its entirety, of life rendered beautiful and rendered worth living, not once nor twice, but eternally.

Even as the egoism of Nietzsche depasses the individual, so does it surpass the egoism of Stirner. Stirner fixes his regard, not on the race, not on life in general, but solely on the individual, on the Unique. Every ideal, those of humanity, of fatherland, of the race, of God, of morality—all vanish and disappear as soon as the Ego affirms himself, glorious and all-powerful in his unicity. The Unique of Stirner cares not for the race, he recognises no such thing as *inter pares*, for is he not Unique, incomparable? The justification of life as a supreme artistic creation, the justification of all life in its superior manifestations; such is not the thought of Stirner. His Unique remains the Unique and incomparable Ego, the sole reality, whose object is neither good nor bad, nor love nor hatred, but which is solely his *own*. The Unique of Stirner seeks not to justify all life by his deeds; he cares not whether all life be justified in him, by the reflection of his beauty and power. He seeks only himself, he cares only for himself. Stirner's egoism is limited by the fact of individuation. It does not surpass the individual. For Stirner the individual is not merely the centre of all things, he is the *only* thing. "Far from me that object which is not My object," he exclaims. The *other* has no tangible reality for the Ego. The only reality is the *self*. Obviously, all idea of a superior race, all idea of a justification of life by this superior race, is abolished, since the Ego is Unique, incomparable. Consequently



the duties which Nietzsche imposes on the Over-Man are disdained scornfully by the Unique. What reason exists for suffering? Because only through suffering can the creator be hardened and rendered fit to fulfil his task, which is the creation of art, which is the giving to humanity of a new table of values which shall justify and redeem life. To this the Unique would reply: by virtue of what right do you speak to me of a task? The only task I know is My own task, that which I have set to myself. What signifies it, this giving to humanity of a new table of values which shall justify life? I know not humanity, and the only value I know is My own value, which is unique and incomparable even as I am unique and incomparable.

Thus the egoism of Nietzsche differs from the egoism of Stirner, in surpassing it. The difference between these two thinkers is equally great as concerns the other points enumerated by Professor Basch. Stirner favours voluntary as against compulsory co-operation. He pronounces in favour of the régime of contract as against the régime of compulsion. On both these points he is diametrically opposed to Nietzsche. And this difference is quite natural, and springs from the fact that Stirner is an anarchist and Nietzsche an autocrat. Between the anarchism of the one and the autocracy of the other, there can necessarily be but few points of contact.

We do not say that Stirner was not somewhat illogical; or if illogical be a hard word to employ with regard to a thinker who is rigorously logical on most points, we will say that Stirner did not perhaps quite appreciate all the results which would necessarily arise from the application of his system to the social organisation. The voluntary co-operation and the régime

of contract which he favoured more or less vaguely—for Stirner is not a lucid writer—would soon cease in the conflict of all against all, when the strongest acquire everything to which their strength entitles them. The system of Stirner would lead necessarily to the triumph of the strong over the weak.<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche's merit is that, foreseeing this result of his own system, he has succeeded in avoiding that anarchy which he detested above all things, and which Stirner favoured. For Nietzsche, the triumph of the strong, the brutal and pitiless triumph, is not a mere victory of animal passions; it is, in the thought of Nietzsche, a victory of the fittest over the less fit, of the better and stronger races of humanity over the weaker. Thus it is a triumph which results in an amelioration of the human race, in an increase of its power. With Nietzsche, the *ultima ratio*, to which everything is reduced, is the race. The egoism of the individual is justified only in the light of its ultimate value to the race. With Stirner, the individual is himself the *ultima ratio*, and his own individual satisfaction constitutes the justification of his egoism.

Herein lies the principal difference, the radical difference, between Stirner and Nietzsche. We do not judge between them. The work of Stirner is a great work, pitiless in its logic, fruitful in many of its results. The Unique, the strong man, who knows no law but the law of his own force, the destroyer of gods and

<sup>1</sup>That is to say, once the stronger types of humanity are definitely in possession of power, "voluntary" co-operation and "contract" would necessarily cease as far as the vanquished are concerned. Voluntary co-operation and contract are excellent instruments for enabling the strong to reap the advantages of their strength. But, once the power obtained, it is certain that slavery and despotism would soon be substituted for voluntary co-operation and contract.



ideals, the incomparable Ego whose every act reveals the ferocious and unmoral Will of Power behind it—this is a striking conception, and the work of Stirner may prove a veritable consolation to those strong and proud spirits who are disgusted with the spectacle of modern politics and are broken-hearted at the sight of the bankruptcy of every ideal which the “century of liberalism and progress” has worshipped one after another, and who stand to-day in morose solitude like rocks amidst the boundless ocean. For such as these is Stirner’s work destined, and by such as these will it be understood. But Nietzsche has gone out beyond Stirner. He has adopted Stirner’s conception and depassed it. Transformed by the genius of Nietzsche, Stirner’s Unique has become more than the centre of his own individuality ; his activity has been extended ; and the egoist, through his egoism and force and Will of Power, has become the great creator, through whom all life and all becoming are redeemed and justified.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VALUE OF NIETZSCHE

IN concluding this study of the philosophy of Nietzsche, it is fitting to examine the question of the value of Nietzsche as philosopher, thinker and poet. That the influence of Nietzsche has been great, that it has been immense, all over Europe, and especially in France and Germany, is in itself no proof of the value of Nietzsche's philosophic thought. It is, indeed, very largely explained by the style of his writing and by the force of his expression. The aphorism is a convenient manner of expressing one's philosophic thought. It dispenses the writer from any great dialectic effort. It expresses in an apodictical form propositions which, although they do but represent the opinion of the writer, appear under this form in the light of an axiomatical truth. The aphorism in addition permits of a force of expression, of a robustness of language, which might be decidedly out of place in a dialectical or schematical work. Nietzsche's success with the mass is undoubtedly due in large measure to the aphorism. His success must also, in large part, and unfortunately, be attributed to the violence of his language, to the virulence of his attacks on ideas and symbols held sacred by humanity, to the exaggeration in which he revelled. But these are the baser causes of his success. In the world of thinkers and philosophers his success is due partly to the very grandeur of his philosophic thought,



partly to his undaunted intrepidity, partly to the depth of his insight into men and things, partly to the sublime poetry with which he clothed all his teaching. For Nietzsche is a great artist, a great poet, a profound and bold and courageous thinker, and one of the greatest psychologists which the world has produced.

We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by that exaggeration which is at once a weakness and a great asset of Nietzsche's. "There is not one single buffoonery in the gospels ; that alone suffices to condemn a book." "One must put on gloves in order to touch the gospels, so as to preserve one's hands from contamination." "The two greatest plagues of the human race, Christianity and alcoholism." "I will write this eternal indictment of Christianity upon every wall. . . . I will use letters which even the blind can see. I denounce Christianity as the One great Curse, as the One Corruption, as the One great instinct of revenge for which no means are too poisonous, treacherous, and small—I denounce it as the one undying disgrace of humanity."

This outburst of fury against Christianity is explained by the view taken by Nietzsche of the inception of that religion, coupled with the view held by him of existence in general. Nietzsche is an enthusiastic and passionate advocate of the life in force and in beauty. His ideal is the Greek ideal, the ideal of Dionysus and Apollo ; life at any price, life with all its woes and joys and hopes and fears, worshipped, glorified, cultivated ; the Over-Man as supreme type incarnating this Dionysian and Apollinian vision of life, incarnating the beauty and purity and symmetry of form, the power and force and strength of the unrestrained and unmoral Will of Power ; such is Nietzsche's ideal. And opposed to

this ideal, diametrically opposed to it, hindering and retarding its realisation, Nietzsche sees the anæmic ideal preached by primitive Christianity, which regards life as a woe, and the earth as a vale of tears, and which glorifies the weakest and most abject types of humanity—the slave, the publican, the outcast, the leper. What wonder is it that Nietzsche hated Christianity? Humanity, according to Nietzsche, is justified solely by its superior types, by the Over-Men which it produces, and who by their force, their beauty, their creative power, justify the whole world. The redeemer of the world is not he who dies for the sins of the world; the redeemer is he who lives, and who by his life shows man the infinite possibilities of existence, who by his life opens out new horizons which tell of beauty and of force and of great expansion. The redeemer affirms life by his glorification of it. Each new creation, each new work of art, each great example is a new redemption. Not only Æschylus and Shakespeare, Goethe and Beethoven, Praxiteles and Raphael are redeemers of life, and affirmers of life; but also the great warrior: he who has, by his very power of destruction, awakened man to a consciousness of his strength and of his place in the universe, and thereby set a new ideal before humanity—an Alexander, a Borgia, a Napoleon—is a redeemer of humanity.

The meaning of Nietzsche is that there are two distinct systems of morals—the morals of the Masters and the morals of the slaves. And the ulterior significance of this division is that there are two races, anthropologically distinct, even as they are mentally and morally distinct. There is a superior race, and there is an inferior race. By this division, Nietzsche does not mean arbitrarily to divide the human species



into two anthropological races. His meaning is that, given an indefinite number of races, or of "ethnies," which is the term preferred by the anthroposociological school, these races may, alike from the physical and mental point of view, be roughly divided into a superior and inferior race. The superior race, which is strong, which incarnates the unchecked Will of Power, which loves beauty and symmetry, which is in every respect a race alike of conquerors and of artists—of conquerors and artists, understood not in the narrow sense of the words, but conquerors and artists in every domain, whether physical, moral or æsthetic—this superior race will have a moral code reflecting its character, a moral code in which all the virtues of the Will of Power will celebrate their saturnalia. On the other hand, the inferior race, living in constant fear and dread of the tyranny of the superior race—the inferior race, weak alike in vital power and in initiative, weak physically and incarnating a deep physiological degeneracy ; this race will have a code of morals as diametrically opposed to that of the masters, as the physical character of each is opposed. On the one hand, therefore, a code of morals in which good signifies all that which is strong and powerful and beautiful, and which reflects an exuberant and overflowing vitality ; on the other hand, a code of morals in which the first evaluation is *transvaluated*, to use Nietzsche's favourite expression, and in which good is synonymous with all that is weak and degenerate ; weakness becomes goodness, cowardice becomes humility, the lust of hate and the war against all that is successful and strong becomes the "fight against sin" ; the slaves and outcasts become the "elect of God" ; to them is promised the "Kingdom of Heaven" ; and it is decreed that it is

easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a *rich* man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Cowardice and meanness and the impotency to avenge oneself are here exalted, and it is expressly recommended that, when struck upon the one cheek, the other should be voluntarily offered to the aggressor. How different to the code of the aristocrat, of the strong man, conscious of his power and of his greatness, and whose code is not merely an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, but destruction for its own sake, destruction as an expression of exuberant vitality, destruction as a safety-valve for a great and formidable Will of Power, destruction as a means of creation !

Creation ! Such is the great task, the great mission of the superior man, of him whom Nietzsche calls the Over-Man. The creation of a new table of moral and metaphysical values, which shall reverse the table of Christian values ; the creation of art and beauty, in which man shall see his own power reflected, in which he shall be uplifted above himself, in which he shall find the inspiration which shall give him renewed courage and confidence in himself and in his destiny. The creation of a new ideal, of a new supreme value for humanity—such is the task of the Over-Man ; and it is a task which is great, which is herculean, which requires for its adequate fulfilment all those qualities of strength, courage, and of artistic inspiration, with which the Over-Man is endowed.

But if the Over-Man be necessary for humanity, so is the slave and the mediocrity necessary. The Over-Man is necessary as a creator of new values for the whole race. And, in order to do so, he must redeem humanity from the degradation which afflicts it at the present moment, as the result of nineteen centuries of Christianity. To redeem



humanity, it is necessary to scourge it, to inflict upon it every hardship and every suffering, because only in the school of suffering—of intense suffering—can humanity be purged and purified—only in the school of intense suffering can the creator himself be steeled to his task, be rendered worthy to fulfil his task as creator.

But the creator, the Over-Man, must fix his attention on his task as a creator of new values, of values which shall determine for humanity its aim for a thousand years to come. The Over-Man needs the masses under him, he needs them in order to subsist. The ordinary work of civilisation, the drudgery and toil of life, must needs be performed ; and its performance requires a vast host of workers, willing, laborious, obedient, of mediocre intelligence, diligent, unpretending. The life of these drudges and toilers of civilisation must needs be hard and must needs be monotonous ; but there is every reason to suppose that, in a social organisation firmly established and controlled by a will of iron, the position of these toilers would be more secure than it is to-day in the modern State. Contempt for these toilers of civilisation, or detestation of them, is unworthy of the philosopher and the superior man. The latter must keep his rank, he must jealously guard the dignity of his position ; but he must look on the masses as “ Werkzeuge ”—that is to say, as tools which he, the sculptor, needs, in order to create out of the shapeless block of marble, which is humanity, a statue worthy of himself, and worthy to be set up as an ideal before humanity in the coming generations.

Such, then, is the central idea of Nietzsche. It is an idea which is essentially aristocratic and anti-

democratic. It constitutes the antithesis of the ideal which is current to-day—the ideal of equality and liberty for all men. This modern ideal, which finds in Nietzsche its most formidable opponent, is due in part to Christianity ; in part to the influence of Kant and of the school of Liberal philosophy which teaches that every man should be treated as an end in himself, not as a means ; in part to modern science and to the culture which science favours ; in part to the State, which is itself the outcome of the three preceding factors. And thus Christianity and Liberalism and science and the State, all find in Nietzsche a relentless antagonist.

Along with this central idea of Nietzsche, we find some extremely interesting side-glances at certain problems of psychological importance, such as the origin of sin and the rôle of the priest among the inferior race. “ Conscience ” and “ sin ”—these are the two great weapons, the two deadly-poisoned arrows, used by Christianity against the superior races. Born at a period in which the entire ancient civilisation of Rome was menaced with destruction, when the old ideals were fast expiring, when hordes of barbarians from the East were hastening the work of destruction and decay, when the old world seemed to be engulfed in one immense cataclysm, Christianity had a task which was easy. On the one hand, it had to do with a dying civilisation, and what more easy than to inspire the remaining elements of the Roman nobility with the belief that this formidable catastrophe was due to “ sin against God ” ? On the other hand, it had to do with a new race, or rather with new races, great in their unchecked Will of Power, but lacking the stamina of the older races. Christianity set itself the task of rendering these young barbarian



racés ill, ill with the disease of conscience and sin, ill with the spectacle of the bleeding victim on the cross. Christianity succeeded. The precise reasons of its success are doubtful, but the result is certain.

The rôle of the priest among the inferior race is an important one. The slaves, according to Nietzsche, are possessed of every bad instinct of revenge and hate and lust of destruction. These instincts have been manifested notably during the French Revolution—one need only recall the burning of the Bastille, the September massacres, the *noyades* of Nantes, the execution of Marie Antoinette—and again during the Commune of 1871. It is necessary to keep these bad instincts of the mass in check; and the priest, himself a slave and a degenerate, and knowing intimately the character of those among whom he works and lives, acts as a moral policeman for the masses. The weapon of conscience is as a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it is the worm which, little by little, destroys the happiness and the physique of the strong man, which instils into his mind the insidious poison of doubt. On the other hand, it is the means by which the evil instincts of the mass are held in check and prevented from exploding.

Thus we find Nietzsche; an aristocrat. Aristocracy is the essence of Nietzsche, aristocracy of sentiment, of taste, of thought. As an aristocrat he glorifies the Over-Man, supreme type of aristocracy; as an aristocrat he has a supreme contempt for the masses; as an aristocrat he is hard of heart and preaches hardness, because only in the school of hardness can the veritable aristocrat be found.

And the other cardinal feature of Nietzsche we find to be his love of life, his intense love of life, of the

life in beauty, in power and strength. His love of life approaches the heroic ; or rather it realises the heroic. Life is to be loved because life is a means of experience, because life is a means of creating beauty, and ever more beauty. Life is the supreme work of art, and as a work of art life is justified and life is redeemed.

But life is not *in itself* a work of art ; it is a work of art just in the measure that we are ourselves artists, and creators of art, just in the measure that we, out of the plenitude of our power, give an artistic value to life. For this reason is the Over-Man necessary, for the Over-Man is the great creator, the great and supreme artist, by whom and through whom all life is justified and redeemed. And the value of the Over-Man is such, the beauty of the life which he represents is so intense, the vision of the possibilities of the strength and creative power of all life which he holds out to us is so glorious, life is through him rendered so supremely valuable, that we can, in the presence of so magnificent a spectacle, but wish for life to be *eternal*, because eternity alone can suffice for the realisation of those boundless possibilities which the Over-Man has shown us.

And the doctrine of the Everlasting Return is the crowning-point of the doctrine of the Over-Man. The vision of beauty incarnated in the Over-Man is such that it makes us ardently desire the everlasting return of all things, so that life may be rendered ever more beautiful, ever more valuable. Such is the thought of Nietzsche. And Nietzsche does not appear to perceive the contradiction into which he falls. The Everlasting Return, what does it signify ? It signifies, as Nietzsche has himself told us, that every hour and every ray of sunshine, and every hope and



every joy, and every bitter tear and every cruel suffering and every bleak moment of despair and disillusionment, must recur, and perpetually recur, and always and eternally recur. The highest standpoint to which a man can attain, he tells us, is the standpoint of *amor fati*. We are to love life, and desire life, but life is a colossal Fatality, and against the inexorable decrees of Fate we can do nothing. The wise man is he who, recognising this supreme truth of the deadly fatality of all things, yet is strong enough to console himself with the thought that he has *wished* that which Fate has decreed. By the sheer power of his thought he is to uplift himself above Fate, he is to give himself the illusion of a will which is free, he is to say to all that which takes place: “I *willed* it so.”

“Now do I die and disappear, and in an instant I will be no longer. The soul is as mortal as the body.

“But the chain of causes of which I am a link returns—it will create me again. I myself do but form a link in the chain of causes which make up the Everlasting Return of things.

“I will return together with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this serpent—I will return *not* unto a new life, nor unto a better life, nor unto a similar one.

“I will return eternally to this *same* identical life, both in great things, and in small, so as to teach again the Everlasting Return of all things—

“So as to preach again the doctrine of the great Mid-day, so as to preach again the advent of the Over-Man.

“I have delivered my message, my message is fatal unto me; thus is it decreed by the eternal Destiny; I disappear while still a forerunner.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Werke,” vi. 322.

The lyric beauty of the language of Zarathustra is great, but the logic of Nietzsche's argument is here less evident. On the one hand, life is eternal, life *must be* eternal, life should be desired as eternal, because life is a perpetual Becoming, because eternity alone suffices for the realisation of life's beauties, because the object of life is the creation of beauty, and the creation of beauty cannot be limited by a concept of time. In eternity alone can the Over-Man find scope for his creative power, eternity alone is worthy of the values which he sets above humanity, of the monuments which it is his task and privilege to create. And now we are told that life is not a perpetual Becoming, that it is something fixed and rigid, and something fixed immutably for all eternity. How, then, can the creator aim at rendering life ever more beautiful, ever more fertile, if we are condemned to an everlasting repetition? Why should the Over-Man appear to redeem humanity if humanity's fate is exorably sealed for all time by a mysterious Fate? What reason has this eternal life, what sense has this Everlasting Return of all things? Ixion is condemned eternally to turn the same wheel! Sisyphus condemned eternally to see the rock fall back on his head! And the reward for this eternal "Streben," for this unending martyrdom? The reward is the conscience of having the illusion of being oneself the agent of one's tortures, whereas one knows all the time that one is but a puppet in the hands of Fate!

In truth the idea is heroic, and herculean and truly Nietzschean in its heroism. To work perpetually for the amelioration of the race, to seek to create new values which shall give to humanity an aim for a thousand years, to undergo privation and hardship and suffering in order to be rendered worthy of so



august a task—and why? Why, indeed, work and create and suffer if life be but an Everlasting Return? Why seek to beautify life, if life be but the emanation of an inexorable Fate? *Amor fati!* It is a heroic motto, certainly, but in what way is it capable of inspiring the creator, of inspiring the Over-Man to great deeds? When the creator realises the fact that *he is in truth no creator*, but that fatality rules everything, that everything which is, whether good or bad or hideous or beautiful, is bound to recur, always in the exact conditions in which it was once produced, and to recur eternally—when the creator realises this, will not the cry of *amor fati* sound rather in his ears as a gigantic mockery, will he not rather be tempted to exclaim: “My, God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

The doctrine of the Everlasting Return, which Zarathustra has come to reveal as the crowning doctrine of the whole philosophy of the Over-Man, remains nevertheless unconvincing. Of course, we can know for certainty nothing with regard to such problems as these. Death is the great abyss which confronts us all, to which all are hurrying; and as to what takes place on the other side of that “little strip of sea,” no one can say anything with certainty, for none who have crossed the line have ever returned. But, where metaphysical speculation and religious belief are powerless, science may say a word; it is not the final word, perhaps, but the torch of modern science, both physico-chemical and psycho-physiological, may help to illuminate the darkness of our path through this labyrinth. Nietzsche has committed the error, the very serious error, of taking for granted that the number of combinations of the matter which composes the universe is a fixed and even limited

number ; whereas the truth is that the number of combinations of matter is infinite ; so that the chances of a repetition of the exact combinations which have produced the existing conditions of things are practically *nil*. The mysticism of Nietzsche is interesting in that it shows the extent to which this enthusiastic prophet of the Over-Man is prepared to push his affirmation of life ; and in truth no affirmation of life can go beyond that contained in the philosophy of the Everlasting Return. But this mysticism must be pronounced to be without practical value in the history of philosophic thought.

Nietzsche is known to the great public chiefly by certain famous aphorisms, such as the affirmation that " every great act is a crime," such as his assertion that the greatness of a man must be measured by his capacity to inflict suffering without heeding the shrieks of the victim. But behind the system of Nietzsche, immoralist and atheist and destroyer of all the ancient values of humanity, we find another system, which is fundamental, whereas the other is but a superstructure.

Nietzsche proclaims himself an immoralist, and yet no one has ever sacrificed more in the cause of morality and truth than the creator of Zarathustra. Nietzsche's immoralism is the result of a moral sentiment pushed to excess. Nietzsche attacked the validity of truth itself—in the name of truth. Yielding to a conscience so scrupulous, so refined, so delicate, that the least suspicion of intellectual improbity was insupportable to it, Nietzsche determined to call in question the value of the supreme values—the value of truth itself. If we believe in truth, is it not because we are *interested* in believing



in it? Persuaded that our belief in truth is itself but the result of accumulated prejudice or passion, Nietzsche questioned the validity of that belief. Truth was the instrument with which Nietzsche sought to destroy our belief in truth; love of truth pushed to its farthest limits was the motive which inspired his attacks.

Nietzsche proclaims himself hard, and in truth he is hard and cruel, and sympathy is not his failing. But does his hardness spring from a selfish egoism? We have already posed the question and answered it in the negative. If Nietzsche is hard, and if he preaches hardness of heart, it is because he sees in suffering the great means of beautifying life and strengthening the race; Nietzsche has ever before his eyes the spectacle of the race of the future, strong, confident, joyous, living in beauty. Nietzsche says: "Life is in itself without sense. It appertains to us to give it a sense. But the masses, the inferior races, are incapable of giving life a sense, for life can be justified solely as a work of art, it can be justified solely by the creation of the artist, and the masses are incapable of creation, and they do but serve and wait. A strong race is thus necessary in order to justify life, a race of creators is a fundamental necessity. But it is only when steeled and hardened by suffering, by great suffering, that that race is capable of fulfilling its great task, that it is capable of giving to life a destiny and a value. It is therefore necessary that the masses should toil and suffer and be exploited, in order that the race of creators, the race of the Over-Men, may thrive, for through this suffering and exploitation is the masters' work rendered possible, and the beauty of the creator will reflect itself on the whole of humanity, thus giving to the

masses some slight value which they would otherwise not possess. Suffering is thus essential to humanity ; it is necessary as a discipline for the creator, and through it are beauty and great things realised, and a value given to all life, which thus finds itself redeemed, justified and affirmed."

Nietzsche proclaims himself an immoralist, and yet this immoralism of the masters is but immoralism by contrast with the moralism of Christianity, and which is generally prevalent in Europe to-day, and it is an immoralism which cloaks a system of morals lacking nothing in rigidity. It is not the masters who live in luxury and vice ! Liberated from all duty towards the masses, towards the pariahs, towards his inferiors, the master is held down to a strict and rigid duty towards his equals, *inter ares*. Those who regard the immoralism of Nietzsche as a danger for society, who see in Nietzsche an anarchist, are much mistaken. For it must always be remembered that the philosophy of Nietzsche is not, and was not destined to be, a philosophy for humanity. " One must be superior to humanity through the greatness of soul, through the great contempt," Nietzsche writes in the preface to the " Antichrist." The philosophy of Nietzsche is essentially and exclusively a philosophy for the few, for the superior *élite* ; it is an aristocratic philosophy. And the motto which inspired Nietzsche was that which Faust had already proclaimed to be " der Weisheit letzter Schluss " :

" Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben  
Der täglich sie erobern muss."

It is necessary always to keep this motto in mind when reading Nietzsche ; for it gives the clue to Zarathustra's conception of the Over-Man.



What is this conception? What is the Over-Man? In the first place, the Over-Man will be the great Creator. It is his duty and also his privilege *to create* the moral and metaphysical values which give a meaning to life and to humanity. This is his sacred duty and his august privilege. The Over-Man alone it is who is capable of giving to humanity an aim and an ideal which shall hold good for a thousand years hence. In the second place, the Over-Man, who creates in the plenitude of his power the tables of values for humanity, himself lives, and must necessarily live, beyond and above all systems of morals, beyond and above all creeds, since it is he who creates the systems of morals and the creeds which serve for the use of humanity. But, beyond and above the morality and the religion of humanity, in general, the Over-Man has his morality and his religion, which, if they are beyond and above those of the rest of humanity, are none the less strict and affirmative and enthusiastic. The Over-Man is above all things a Believer. Belief in life, and in the life of beauty and strength, is his creed, but it is a belief which is intense, which is enthusiastic, which carries all before it in the exuberance of its joy. Belief, has said M. Ferdinand Brunetière, is inseparable from action; and belief, said Nietzsche, is action, and action is belief.

“When you raise yourselves above all praise and blame; and when your will, the will of one who loves, desires to command unto all things: this is the origin of your virtue.

“When you despise all that which is agreeable, the soft bed, and when you cannot repose yourself at too great a distance from the soft bed: this is the origin of your virtue.

“ When you desire with one unique will, and when the vicissitudes of fate are recognised as a necessity by you : this is the origin of your virtue.

“ In truth, we have here a new good and a new bad ! In truth, it is as the voice, profound and fresh, of a new source ! ” <sup>1</sup>

We see here what, according to Nietzsche, is the highest possibility to which the will can aspire. That highest possibility is attained when the will contrives to give to itself the *illusion* of being free ; when the will says to itself : “ I *know* I am not free. I know I am but the agent of Fate, and of an inexorable Fate. But the universal necessity of all things, both in my individual life and in the whole order of things—that universal necessity of which I partake—is *willed* by me. That will of mine is but an illusion. But I *will* the illusion. And thus illusion and Fate partake, for me, of my *will*.” In other words, the will oversteps the sphere of knowledge and partakes of the illusion by willing the illusion.

But, it may be objected, if the will be but an illusion, and if the highest possibility of will-power be attained in the *amor fati*, that possibility is singularly narrowed down. What about the famous will of Power, of which all life is but the manifestation ? What about the Will of the creator, the will which shall mark the impress of its seal on the destinies of humanity for a thousand years ? And here again we are brought face to face with that great contradiction in the doctrine of Nietzsche : the glorification of the sovereign Will and of the almighty will-power, on the one hand ; and the philosophy of *amor fati*, the resignation in the face of the universal necessity of all things, on the other. The contradiction between

<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vi., III, 112.



the voluntarist and materialist schools, between the free-will of the metaphysicians and the universal necessity of the scientist—this contradiction attains its fullest expression in the philosophy of Nietzsche.

The will of power glorified by Nietzsche is singularly modified, alike in its extent and in its intensity, by the *amor fati*. The will of the creator resolves itself finally into an acceptance, heroic undoubtedly, but resigned, of Fate. The religious negation of Nietzsche, the atheism of him who proclaims everywhere that God is dead—this atheism, does it not also resolve itself into a religion, a new religion, a religion beyond and above all the religions? M. Fouillée has justly remarked: “His philosophy is composed of poetry and mythology; it resembles in this way all the myths to which humanity has given birth. His philosophy is a faith without proof, an unending chain of aphorisms, of oracles, and of prophecies, and in this respect it is also a religion. The Anti-christ of the dying century believed himself to be a new Christ, superior to the former one.”<sup>1</sup>

For Zarathustra, as we have said, is no mere destroyer. It is true that he pursues everything which humanity to-day reveres and honours—religion, science, morality, liberty—with a bitter hatred and relentless sarcasm. Institutions which to humanity seem sacred, institutions which have, by common consent, been removed beyond the region of controversy, the most ancient beliefs, the most fundamental articles of faith—all are attacked, savagely and remorselessly, by Zarathustra. But Zarathustra is not merely the avenging angel of destruction. His venerable hands are also uplifted in benediction and from his lips proceed words of joyous affirmation.

<sup>1</sup> A. Fouillée: “Nietzsche et l’Immoralisme,” p. 181.

"O firmament above me, bright and deep! Light of the world, in contemplating thee I am inspired by the divine desire!

"To rise to the heights in which thou art, such is the depth to which I aspire! To shelter myself beneath thy purity, such is my innocence! . . .

"Such have we always been! Our sorrows, our fears and our aims are common to both of us. The sun itself is common to both of us.

"We do not speak, for we know all things. We remain silent and we communicate what we know only by smiles. . . .

"I have a grudge against the passing clouds, against those wild cats which crawl; they take from both of us that which we have in common—namely, the great and infinite *affirmation* of all things.

"But I bless and I affirm always, provided thou be around me, pure sky, source of light! Then do I carry down even unto the bottom of the precipices my joyous affirmation.

"I am become the one who blesses and who affirms; and to become this I have fought long. I was once a fighter so that I might one day have my hands free in order to bless.

"And this is my benediction: to be above all things, like unto one's own firmament, one's own round roof, one's own azure bell, and one's own eternal solitude; and happy is he who is thus able to bless.

"For all these things are baptised in eternity's source, and are beyond everything good and bad; and the good and the bad are themselves but fugitive shadows and passing clouds!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," vi. 240 ff.



Above and beyond the religions, Nietzsche places his religion. God is dead, the belief in God is no longer permitted to the free spirit, to the Over-Man. For how could the creator of values, he whose work the beliefs of humanity are, tolerate a God above him! "If there be a God, how comes it that I am not God?" asks Zarathustra. The god of the Over-Man is himself. He it is who gives to humanity its faith and its ideals.

The golden house of Nero is gone, and the cross of wood on which Jesus Christ was stretched nineteen centuries ago is gone, but above and beyond these rises the glorious vision of the new religion. A new religion, such is Zarathustra's cry. The new religion will not be the religion of humanity, or the religion of love, or the religion of human suffering—it will be the religion of beauty, and of enthusiastic affirmation of life. The vision of the Over-Man rises before Zarathustra's eyes, the vision of him who will break the old tables of the law, and who will create the new tables, who will give a new aim and a new value to all life, who by his strength and his power, and by the beauty of his works and the grandeur of his artistic creation, will redeem and sanctify all life in himself.

And thus does the religion of Zarathustra, above and beyond all religions, appear as the antithesis, and also as the complement, of Christianity. Jesus Christ died to redeem the world; but he died for the poor and lowly, the weak and the suffering, for all those who are weary and are heavy-laden. For such as these, Zarathustra has no pity, but only contempt. If Jesus Christ died to redeem the world, it was because the world is bad, because the world is the refuge of sin and tears, and because only through

him could humanity be rendered worthy of the other world, of the world above this, of the world of eternal felicity. But the Over-Man dies, not to prepare humanity for the felicity of another world, but to affirm this present world of ours. The Over-Man is willing and joyous to undergo every suffering and every hardship, because this world of ours is beautiful enough and valuable enough for him to be able to endure any amount of suffering and hardship. For the Over-Man, in the overflowing and exuberant vitality of his soul, suffering and hardship are necessary to the creation of beauty ; it is necessary that the creator should be steeled in the school of suffering, that he should be immersed ever and ever again in the sea of suffering, so as to prevent him from falling into that greatest of vices—the vice of softness and luxurious idleness. Suffering is a result of the overflowing richness of his vitality. Out of this overflowing richness, he is able to worship suffering, as a necessity and also as a luxury. For the Over-Man, the world is redeemed, but it is redeemed by him and for him, for the Over-Man is the sense and the aim and the *raison-d'être* of life ; and if, on the one hand, suffering is the redemption of the Over-Man, on the other hand the Over-Man is the redemption of the world.

“ Dionysus versus the Crucified One : here is the supreme contrast. It is not a difference in the *form* of the martyrdom ; but the difference is in the *meaning* of the latter. On the one hand, it is Life itself, in its eternal fecundity and reconstruction, which brings with it every torture, and also destruction and the desire of the nirvana. . . . On the other hand, suffering itself, under the symbol of the ‘ innocent one crucified,’ is made to serve as a protest



against life, as the formula of its condemnation. One sees, therefore, that the problem before us is that of the meaning of suffering: is suffering to be interpreted in the Christian or in the tragic sense? In the first case, if interpreted in the Christian sense, suffering is the path which leads to a better and holier life; in the second case, life is considered as being already sufficiently sacred and precious in itself to be able to justify even the greatest amount of suffering. The man nursed in the traditions of classical tragedy says 'yes' to the most intense suffering. He is able to do this owing to the greatness of his strength and of his riches, owing to his powerful enthusiasm. The Christian says 'no' to even the happiest of earthly lives; he is weak enough, and miserable and pitiable enough, to suffer from life under any form. The Christ on the cross is a curse on life, a warning to us to flee from life; the mutilated body of Dionysus is a glorification of life—eternally destroyed, it is eternally re-born.”<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche is thus in a sense the continuator of the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the first great transvaluator of values, according to Nietzsche. He was the transvaluator of the values of the masters, of the aristocratic values, which he perverted into the values of the masses and the rabble. Nietzsche is the continuator of the work of transvaluation, but in an opposite sense. Zarathustra's philosophy forms the complement to the Sermon on the Mount, which it destroys. Jesus Christ has set the seal of his name on humanity's destinies for two thousand years. From the carpenter's shop at Nazareth has proceeded the greatest revolution which the world has known. The cross of wood on Calvary was to give mankind

<sup>1</sup> "Werke," xv. 290.

an ideal and an aim for two thousand years hence, it was to engrave itself in the history of the world in a manner that is indeed "harder than brass, nobler than brass." And Zarathustra has come, as the best enemy of Jesus Christ, to give to humanity a new aim and a new ideal, the antithesis of the ideal set up in the Sermon on the Mount nineteen centuries ago. The psalms of Zarathustra are to replace the Beatitudes. Zarathustra has borrowed from the gospels much of his method. Like Jesus, he has his disciples, the "superior men" of to-day, who, disgusted with life, come to listen to the preaching of the prophet of the Over-Man. Like Jesus, he institutes a sort of "Last Supper," but which, by its joyousness, forms a startling contrast with the original one. Like Jesus, he employs the aphorism and the parable in order to impart his doctrines to his disciples. The method of prophets is always the same; whether it be Konfutze, or Sakya-Muni, or Jesus, or Mahomet, or Zarathustra, we find the same features recur.

But whereas Jesus Christ came to preach a transvaluation of values on behalf of, and in the interests of, the inferior races and the slaves, Nietzsche has sent Zarathustra to preach a transvaluation on behalf of the masters and the superior race. Thus Jesus and Zarathustra are both creators of values, but of totally opposite and antithetical values. Zarathustra is constantly reminded of his predecessor, and he regrets the early death of the latter.

"In truth, he died too early, this Hebrew who is honoured by all the preachers of death by slow means. And it has been a fatality for many since then, that he died too soon.

"He had no time to know anything beyond the



tears and the melancholy peculiar to the Hebrew, and also the hatred of the good and the just, this Hebrew Jesus ; and suddenly he was seized with the desire of death.

“ Why did he not remain in the desert, far from the good and the just ? Perhaps he would then have learned to live and to love life—and also to laugh !

“ My brethren, believe me, he died too soon ; himself would have retracted his doctrine, had he lived to my age ! He was noble enough to be able thus to retract.”

It is, nevertheless, well to insist again on the fact that Nietzsche does not seek the annihilation either of the Christian religion or of morality in general. Nietzsche merely seeks, and seeks passionately, to destroy the *monopoly* of the Christian religion and of morality. Christianity and the moral law are indispensable *in their proper place*. But the sphere of activity of these two institutions is limited, although extensive. Christianity and the moral law are the creations of the inferior races, of the slaves and the “ bourgeoisie.” For the slaves and the “ bourgeoisie ” they were created, they respond to an urgent need of these classes, and for these classes they are in many respects a boon, in other respects a guarantee of security. But they are creations of these classes, they are the creations of a race which is inferior. They are not suitable to the life of the superior race, they are directly antagonistic to the development of the masters. But they have attributed to themselves a monopoly to which not only nothing entitled them, but which is absolutely prejudicial to the interests of the superior elements of the human species. These superior elements are above and beyond both Christianity and the moral law.

For these elements, Christianity and the moral law represent but a means to an end. They are for the masses an illusion and for the masters a protection. But Christianity—of which the moral law is but an emanation—has exceeded its rights ; it has not been content to exercise its activity in the sphere in which and for which it was evolved. The notion of conscience, which was intended as a police agent for the slaves, as a means of withdrawing their vengeance from their masters and concentrating it on themselves—this notion has been employed to poison the minds and sap the power of the masters themselves, by instilling into the latter the insidious poison of doubt.

Against this monopoly of Christianity, against this sapping by Christianity of the power of the masters, Nietzsche's most vehement protests are directed. But the continued existence of the Christian ideal *among those for whom it was intended*, is in every way desirable ; alike on account of the consolation it affords to millions who would otherwise lose all hope and be deprived of every aim ; and on account of the new ideal which Nietzsche proposes to erect beside it and above it—for the new ideal can thrive only on condition that it have an adversary worthy of it. It is certain that nothing consolidates an ideal so much as having to defend itself or having to attack. A people which has no enemies loses consciousness of its superiority, and it is the same with ideals. Things thrive by contrast. And it is through the fight, in the good fight, that Nietzsche's ideal can alone be consolidated.

The philosophy of Nietzsche is essentially a revelation of the author's personality. The value of



Nietzsche lies less in what he says than in what he is ; or rather it lies primarily in what he is. Nietzsche never made any pretension to erudition, or to specialism. Indeed, such a claim, during the last ten years of his intellectual life, would have been manifestly impossible. He had retired from the chair of philology at Bâle in 1879, and henceforth ceased to keep himself abreast of philological progress. The state of his health precluded him from anything like continued or protracted study, and indeed prevented him often from any study at all. These periods of enforced idleness were for Nietzsche of the utmost value. That Nietzsche himself recognised this, is clearly shown by his constant references to the beauty and necessity of solitude, which are always recurring throughout his writings. During these periods the mind of the thinker was concentrated on himself ; it was during these long weary hours of intercourse with self, of self-introspection, of self-observation, that the philosophy of Nietzsche was formed. Nietzsche is essentially a thinker who *lives* every thought and every idea. He is indeed the exact antithesis of those British philosophers whom he so intensely hated, and who are typical "objective" thinkers. Professor Brandes has justly remarked in "*Menschen und Werke*," of the English utilitarians, that they are interesting in their work, but not in their personality. In the work of these British philosophers, from Bentham to Spencer, abstraction is made of the personality of the writer. Not so with Nietzsche. The personality of Nietzsche reads itself in every line, in every thought. Bold, daring, intrepid, caring nothing for contradictions or inconsistencies provided sincerity is obtained, truthful unto heroism, idealistic to excess—all these qualities shine forth

in the work of Nietzsche. Judged by the standard of pure erudition, the value of Nietzsche may be inconsiderable. It is very doubtful as to whether Nietzsche's idea of the genealogy of morals, or his conception of the historical development of Christianity, or his exposition of the origin of the notions of sin and conscience, be correct ; his efforts to base his conception of the two moral systems, that of the masters and that of the slaves, on a peculiar interpretation of certain adjectives, are undoubtedly vain, as M. Bréal has demonstrated. Quotation is not a feature of Nietzsche's works. There is no appeal to authority, no giving of references, no calling of witnesses. Nietzsche is apodictical in form and substance. He substitutes the aphorism, trenchant and brief, for the sustained argument and the reasoned criticism.

What, then, it may be asked, is the value of Nietzsche? If he does not add to our stock of scientific and philosophical knowledge, what value does he possess? And, indeed, we readily recognise that Nietzsche is not a model to be copied. Like every great man, like every great thinker, Nietzsche is a Unique. The method of Nietzsche is suited to Nietzsche only. It was, indeed, the only method suitable to him. A man so unlike others, so immeasurably superior by the depth of his genius and the delicacy of his sentiment to the immense majority—such a man cannot be a measure with which we can measure certain things. Between genius and erudition may exist a profound difference. The erudite is the honourable and laborious worker, thanks to whose efforts the genius can attain to those divine flashes of inspiration which are as the breath of all life and which open out to us new horizons of



infinite possibilities. Shakespeare was no erudite, nor Goethe, nor Beethoven, nor Wagner—but their genius has given life a value, and has enriched it and beautified it and redeemed it.

But to take a genius and propose the methods of this genius as methods to be followed as a general rule, would be not only deplorable but monstrously absurd. It would be equivalent to depriving the genius of that very *inimitable* quality by which he is a genius, and without which he would be as the ordinary lot of men. Genius has its own methods which, like genius itself, are inimitable. Nietzsche is a genius. Every sentence which he writes bears the impress of genius. And, consequently, it bears also the impress of an inimitable personality, of a personality which is unique, whose methods are inimitable and unique like himself.

Nietzsche must thus not be held up as a model. He is no model, because he is too great to be a model. Genius is born, not acquired. And those who are not possessed of genius can but acquire erudition, which is likewise indispensable to the human species. It is through erudition that our stock of knowledge is increased, that our power over the forces of surrounding nature is consolidated, that genius and its inspiration are rendered possible. Without erudition, the highest forms of human life would be impossible, for erudition must precede genius.

It may be objected, again, against Nietzsche, that he is not the synthetical man, in whom is incarnated the synthesis of the intellectual, moral, material and physical progress of an era, and whom he has himself held up as the type of the Over-Man. This objection has much foundation. The Over-Man must combine the inspiration of the artist with the eru-

dition of the man of science. Nietzsche is exclusively an artist and a poet. He has an artist's hatred for science, and does not perceive all the poetry of science, all that science contains of profoundly artistic ! Nietzsche hates erudition, and yet does not perceive that erudition does not necessarily exclude genius, although erudition is by no means identical with genius. But both may co-exist in the same person, as in the case of Darwin, or in that of Pasteur.

Nietzsche, then, does not add one grain to the stock of our positive knowledge in any single domain. Neither does he realise in himself the synthetic type of man, that type which, while adding itself nothing to the stock of the world's knowledge, nevertheless incarnates the efforts of an era, and constitutes thus one of the milestones on the road of human progress. What then is the value of Nietzsche ? Our reply again is : the value of Nietzsche is in Nietzsche's personality.

And truly this value is great, to our mind. We see in Nietzsche the most powerful and healthy of stimuli against materialism, mercantilism, pessimism, socialism, anarchism, pacificism, and against all the notions of nineteenth-century radicalism in general. The value of Nietzsche lies in the example he has given us, and it is a great and healthy example, of danger faced and overcome, of conquest over self, of adventure gladly sought for in the name of truth, of sincerity and fearlessness and disinterestedness. The value of Nietzsche lies also, for us, in the fact that he is as a breakwater striving to check the rush of the onflowing tide of democracy and equalisation.

The great and lasting value of Nietzsche is his *idealism*. The great adversary of theoretical ideology was himself the greatest of idealists. Nietzsche calls upon us to strive after the fulfilment of a great



ideal. We may like or we may dislike that vision of the Over-Man which he has held out to us, but the lesson which we have to learn from Nietzsche is that no people, no race, no individual, can live without an *ideal*. Idealism is the eternal source from which flow the waters of national as of individual life. Nietzsche's value lies in that he has brought us face to face with the deepest and greatest problems. He has destroyed that fabric of cards which the conventional lies of society have set up. By attacking with fury and vehemence the most venerated beliefs, the most sacred notions, which long centuries of tradition have consecrated, Nietzsche has roused us from lethargy, he has compelled us to probe ourselves and our beliefs to the bottom, he has shaken us in the midst of that *dolce far niente* begotten of long and complacent repose. We had begun to look upon certain notions as fundamental, and this thought was comforting to us, it dispensed us from long and wearisome and often perilous researches. Into this heavy atmosphere, calm and deceiving, Nietzsche has thrown a bomb. He has forced us once more to undertake long voyages into unknown seas, to confront perils which we fondly hoped were no more. He has shown us that the path which leads to sanctity and redemption is not the path strewn with roses, but the path strewn with thorns. It is not in the silence of the cloister, far from the rattle and roar of human life, that wisdom is attained; but it is in the fight, and through the fight, through peril confronted and overcome, on the storm-tossed ocean and in the maze of the virgin forest. "Live dangerously," is one of the most admirable mottoes ever given us, and Nietzsche has given it us.

Nietzsche is the angel, not of peace but of war. He

has come, not to bring peace on earth, but a sword. The value of Nietzsche lies in his glorification of suffering as the means of obtaining the redemption of life. It is only in the school of suffering, of intense suffering, that humanity can be steeled to its task. It is only in such a school that all that is best and noblest in humanity can be produced, purified and ennobled by great suffering. The great man, the creator of values, the Over-Man, he who is at once the ideal of humanity and its justification—he is the one who must be most greatly tortured, who must be broken, burned, bruised and grievously afflicted, because only through suffering can that one quality which entitles him above all others to the rank of Over-Man be brought forth and shine—namely, that he hold good.

And this glorification of suffering is not merely theoretical. For Nietzsche knew, better than most men, the bitterness of distress which comes when ideals which one has long venerated, and dearly venerated, are no longer possible. He knew better than most men the anguish which separation from beloved friends entails. He knew better than most men the great loneliness, the sense of utter abandonment, which overtakes all those who live outside their times. And Nietzsche suffered more intensely because he felt more intensely. The greatest tortures are reserved for the most delicate natures.

This rude awakening which Nietzsche has given us, we need it. It remains eternally true that it is in suffering and through suffering that all that is great and lasting can be attained. Those preachers of modern progress who see in the universal democratisation of humanity, and in the universal equalisation of man, the signs of progress—these are false pro-



phets who are themselves the victims of an incurable lack of vitality, which causes them to see in life a process which is not worth living, and which urges them on to try and reduce the trials of life by reducing its vitality, by reducing its dangers and injustices. For life is fundamentally and essentially unjust and immoral. Everywhere in life we see inequality, everywhere we see the victory go to the strong. And this elimination of the weak by the strong is a necessary condition of life. Alone in the realm of nature, man has tried to oppose something, has tried to oppose his little inventions, to the great law of nature. Man has invented the moral law and set it in opposition to the natural law. But the moral law is itself but the expression of a lack of vitality. The man who loves life, who loves life, not in spite of its sufferings but *because* of its sufferings, he who is strong enough to seek the complete realisation of life's possibilities, who is prepared to undergo the most cruel martyrdom in order to realise them—such a man will be above and beyond all moral laws, which serve but to hinder and check the integral development of his personality.

The value of Nietzsche lies also in that he gives us, as well as a higher notion of life, a higher notion of our individual responsibilities and duties. "No duties without rights, and no rights without duties," says the democracy. Duty, says Nietzsche, is synonymous with right, and our duties increase in the same measure as our rights, and the only rights we can legitimately claim are those rights which we have conquered for ourselves. The Over-Man has his rights, he has the supreme right of life and death over the vague masses of humanity; he has the right to use humanity as the sculptor uses the shapeless block of

marble in order to fashion it to his own ends—but the Over-Man has also the greatest and most onerous and most perilous of duties: that of giving to humanity a *meaning* and an *ideal*.

The value of Nietzsche lies in the fact that he takes our eyes away from the sorry spectacle of modern politics and from the sordid interests of personal gain and lucre, and fixes them on higher things. In these days of industrialism, when everything is reckoned according to the profit or loss which its adoption or non-adoption may entail, it is good to be able to refresh oneself at the sources of Zarathustra; it is good to be reminded that there are more lasting interests for humanity than those of commercial speculation; it is good to be reminded that there are higher interests at stake than the fate of rival and pettifogging States.

The value of Nietzsche lies in his virility, in his manliness. More virility, that is what we want. And virility can be attained, like everything else that is precious, only in the school of suffering and through wars and rumours of war. Virility is a sign of the great love of life. And Nietzsche, if he had only preached the love of life, and the joys of life, and the beauty of life, would have possessed great value. Nietzsche is a reaction, and a healthy reaction, against pessimism and nihilism, of which the socialist ideal, the ideal of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, is the outcome.

And as a corollary to his magnificent psalms on the love of life, and the joys of life, and the beauties of life, Nietzsche possesses a great and lasting value for the race. The race which lacks virility, and which looks upon life as an evil; the race which has lost confidence in its destiny and which is corroded by an



existence of luxurious idleness ; the race whose life is placed in conditions such that life is considered as not being worthy dying for, as not being worth the supreme sacrifice ; the race which has lost its faith in a higher ideal and which regards the greatest happiness of the greatest number as the only aim to be striven for—such a race is decadent, such a race is condemned by reason of its anti-vital instincts, such a race must infallibly disappear in the universal struggle if another race, full of faith and strong of will, arise to dispute its patrimony. Nietzsche's eyes are ever fixed on the future of the race. His most ardent desire is to see the development of a race which is strong and confident and joyously affirmative, a race full of exuberant vitality, the very existence of which shall justify life and respond to the question so anxiously and so often asked : “ Wherefore ? ”

Thus is Nietzsche great by reason, so to speak, of the *tonicity* of his influence. When we have read Nietzsche we feel better and stronger ; we admire in him the valiant and unyielding apostle of truth ; we feel more confident in the destinies of humanity ; and our hopes, momentarily clouded by the pettiness of modern life and the sordidness of modern politics, are augmented and rendered buoyant again when we reflect that the race is still capable of putting forth a Nietzsche. Nietzsche has done his task. He has shown us our defects, and he has shown them with a heavy and a brutal hand ; he has shown us also the road to real progress ; and he has, by his vision of the Over-Man, opened out to us vast new horizons full of infinite possibilities. His brutality and his heavy hand are good for us ; they are the only things capable of awakening us from our torpor. It only remains to be seen whether the lesson which he has taught us will be laid to heart.

## CONCLUSION

WE have seen that the immoralism of Nietzsche is but another name for a moralism which shall be beyond and above the moralism of to-day and of yesterday. Nietzsche is an immoralist when compared with Christ. He has adopted every maxim which Christianity repudiates, and has reprobated every maxim which Christianity exalts. In opposition to the Christian ideal, which is one of love and sympathy and forgiveness and gentleness, Nietzsche has preached the gospel of hate and cruelty and hardness of heart. "Become hard" is the great keynote of Zarathustra's teaching. But it is a grievous error to suppose that Nietzsche is "immoral" in the sense usually attributed to that word. The egoism of Nietzsche, we have seen, is dictated in reality by a conception of altruism far more scientific than the Christian conception. Egoism is necessary because egoism is natural, because it is the sole incentive to every great action, because it is a primordial law, which causes us to prefer self to non-self. And the egoism of the masters is dictated by profound reasons; sympathy kills him who sympathises, without bringing any relief to the sufferer. Sympathy inspires those that are strong and happy with mistrust, and causes them to doubt of their right to happiness and strength in the presence of so much misery. And yet the preservation of the strong elements of the race is essential to the continued existence of humanity.



The strong and the happy must defend themselves against sympathy as against the most deadly of foes, for it is upon them, and upon them alone, that the future of the whole race depends. Nietzsche is not an egoist whose ideal is the greatest quantity of individual profit, as he is sometimes represented to be. Nietzsche is an egoist whose ideal is the life in beauty and in strength, whose ideal is a race full of exuberant vitality and joyous affirmation ; and because this ideal can be attained only if we possess hardness enough to be able to suffer without wincing, and hardness enough to be able, if necessary, to inflict suffering without wincing—for this reason is Nietzsche an egoist, for this reason does Zarathustra write above us the new table of values : “ Become hard.”

And the Over-Man is no “immoralist” in the sense usually attributed to the word. No ; he who, in order to attain the rank of creator, must be broken, torn, purified with fire and sword, is no immoralist ; he who, in order to justify himself as a creator of values, must live “ far from the soft bed of idleness,” who must live dangerously, who must be ready for any sacrifice no matter how bitter, is no immoralist. The enthusiastic prophet of life, he who has blessed life and affirmed life, and who has held up to us as an ideal beauty, and ever greater beauty, is no immoralist. To all who would fain be free from all bonds, and who would attempt to use the name of Zarathustra as a pretext for immorality and viciousness, the question of the prophet is posed, and confronts them like a blazing torch : *frei wozu ?*

“ Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben,  
Der täglich sie erobern muss.”

The word “immoralist” has been incorrectly

applied to Nietzsche. Himself, in order to emphasise the contradiction between his doctrine, all impregnated with classical tradition, and modern ideas, declared himself to be an immoralist. But the word was misused. In truth never has a moralist existed so profoundly sincere as Nietzsche. His passionate love of truth at all costs, his hatred of all lies and insincerity and conventionalism, are manifest in every sentence of his works, as in every act of his life. His philosophy has not ended in immoralism. The result of his philosophy is to establish a line of demarcation between one system of morals confined to the very few—the system of the masters—and another system for the masses—the system of the slaves. The morals of the masters are severe, and of iron severity. The master must be worthy of his task, he must be steeled to his task. His task in itself—does not one understand it?—is itself the most iron moral law, for it is the giving of an aim and an ideal to humanity for a thousand years. But he who has, along with so terrible and august a task, so terrible a responsibility, he is necessarily of stronger stuff than those for whom he creates ; and he is not subject to the same rules as these ; and along with the values which he creates for humanity he creates his values for himself.

Thus does the immoralism of Nietzsche resolve itself into the strictest moralism. And in the same way the atheism of Nietzsche resolves itself into a faith which is as a burning flame, and which glows like the evening star in the pale azure sky. The faith of Zarathustra—faith in life, faith in the infinite possibilities of life—is a faith which shall remove mountains. And Nietzsche does here but confirm a law which we witness everywhere in operation,



a law observed by a careful study of social life and social phenomena the world over—namely, that *religion*, under one form or another, is a sociological necessity. We have no single instance, either in practice or in theory, of a society without religion. Religion does not necessarily imply belief in an anthropomorphic deity. Religion means the belief of a community, belief in a common ideal, based on identity of interests. Those philosophies and popular movements most hostile, in appearance, to religion, were all based on a religious or metaphysical belief. Would the French Revolution ever have accomplished its purpose if, above and beyond its crimes and follies, beyond the smoke of the Bastille and the blood of the September massacres, the belief in the universal fraternity of man and in the possibility of a better life under better conditions had not actuated its leaders? The founder of that philosophy of the nineteenth century which was destined to supplant all religions, and to rise superior to all religions, Auguste Comte, the founder of the Positivist philosophy itself, ended by proclaiming, in default of another, the religion of humanity. Socialists and anarchists of to-day, they who wage war on religion and urge the destruction of all religion—they too, they have their religion, and a religion which yields to none in the spirit of sacrifice and devotion which it calls forth in its adherents, a religion which has its martyrs to a cause which they believed to be sacred, like the poor and uneducated communard who, mortally wounded at the barricades, replied when asked for what he was dying: “Pour la solidarité humaine.” And every cause, whether great or small, whether heroic or ignoble, whether right or wrong, must be based on *belief*. The want of belief is among

the most fundamental of human wants ; for belief is necessary to action, and action is necessary to life.

The religion of Nietzsche is the religion of life. And for Nietzsche life is synonymous with beauty and power. And the life which is Nietzsche's ideal is the life in beauty, in ever greater beauty, in ever greater strength and power. Zarathustra has gathered round him in his hut in the mountains a few disciples, among whom is the Most Hideous of Men, he who represents all the woes and tears and sufferings of humanity, he who has slain God by the very hideousness of his sores. And Zarathustra exposes to these his gospel of beauty, his ideal of the Over-Man, his vision of life as it should be, as it can be, his vision of life redeemed, of life sanctified and glorified by the Over-Man. When Zarathustra has finished his lyric poem, it is the Most Hideous of Men, the representative of everything which life contains most supremely ugly, who speaks first :

“ And meanwhile all of them, one after another, had come out into the fresh air and the cool calm night ; Zarathustra himself led the Most Hideous of Men by the hand, so that he might show him the beauties of the night and the big round moon and the silvery waterfall by his retreat. There they at last stood silent together, all these old men, but their heart was comforted and full of courage, and they wondered secretly that it could be so pleasant on earth ; but the stillness of the night pressed ever more deeply upon them. And again Zarathustra thought to himself : ‘ Oh, how they do please me, these superior men ’ ; but he did not give expression to his thought, for he respected their happiness and their silence.

“ But then happened the most astonishing event



of that long and astonishing day ; the Most Hideous of Men began once more, and for the last time, to gurgle and to stutter, and when at last he succeeded in speaking, behold ! there proceeded a question, clear and decided, from his lips, a clear, profound question, which moved all those who stood by.

“ ‘ My friends, said the Most Hideous of Men, what think you ? For the sake of this one day—I am for the first time satisfied that I have lived my life.

“ ‘ And that I do thus bear witness, is not yet enough for me. It is good to live on earth. One day, one festivity with Zarathustra, have taught me to love the world.

“ ‘ Was *this*—Life ? ’ will I ask of Death. ‘ Then—again ! ’

“ ‘ My friends, what think you ? Will you not say unto Death even as I have said : ‘ Was *this*—Life ? For the love of Zarathustra, then, once more ! ’ ”<sup>1</sup>

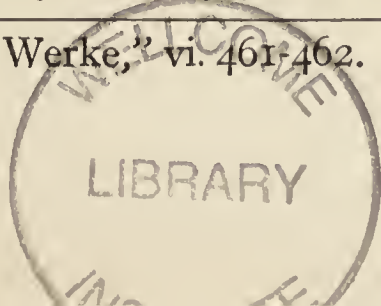
It is the great victory. The religion of Life has triumphed. Zarathustra has not preached in vain. Life is redeemed, life is sanctified by the Over-Man, supreme type of human possibility. Zarathustra has taught the Most Hideous of Men to love life, to love life as incarnated in the Over-Man. And, under the impression caused by this confession of the Most Hideous of Men, of him who has slain God, the assembled little group of disciples to whom Zarathustra has revealed his secret, break forth into that exquisite song, sung to the accompaniment of the church bell ringing in the solemn hour of midnight, the hour which marks the end of the old day, and the dawn of the new :

“ Eins !

Oh Mensch ! Gieb Acht !

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<sup>1</sup> “ Werke,” vi. 461-462.



Zwei !  
 Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht ?  
 Drei !  
 ' Ich schlief, ich schlief—  
 Vier !  
 Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht :—  
 Fünf !  
 Die Welt ist tief,  
 Sechs !  
 Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.  
 Sieben !  
 Tief ist ihr Weh,—  
 Acht !  
 Lust—tiefer noch als Herzeleid,  
 Neun !  
 Weh spricht : Vergeh !  
 Zehn !  
 Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit—  
 Elf !  
 —Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit !'  
 Zwölf !''<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> " One !  
 O Man ! Give heed !  
 Two !  
 What saith the midnight deep ?  
 Three !  
 ' I slept in sleep—  
 Four !  
 From deepest dream I wake ;  
 Five !  
 The world is deep,  
 Six !  
 And deeper than the day can know,  
 Seven !  
 Deep is its woe—  
 Eight !  
 Joy—deeper than affliction still,  
 Nine !  
 Woe saith : Begone !  
 Ten !  
 But all Joy wills Eternity—  
 Eleven !  
 Wills deep, profound Eternity !'  
 Twelve !''













